

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

All THE YEAR ROUND

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THE QUESTION OF CAIN.

BY MRS. CASHEL HOEY.

CHAPTER I. TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.

THE event had profoundly stirred the whole station. The English community at Chundrapore was not a very numerous one, and although the usual class divisions were pretty accurately represented among its members, still everybody knew, or knew of, everybody else in one way or another, and any sudden and unexpected death would have excited interest and comment. But the death of the Rev. Herbert Rhodes, the English chaplain, whom every one knew and every one liked, and whom no division divided from the most or the least important of those among whom his ministry lay; this was an event to create a wide-spread sensation indeed. A sensation which seemed to suspend every other for the moment, and to make all the people in the place realise more forcibly than they had ever before realised it, how emphatically uncertain a possession is human life in the plains of Bengal.

Chundrapore is not a salubrious station; its hot season is tremendously hot, its rainy season is profusely rainy, the country around is as flat as a billiard-table, and the sun gets a long, steady, uninterrupted stare at it for what the English dwellers at Chundrapore regard as an unreasonable proportion of the year. It is a great place for getting leave from, and sick-certificate is an institution that flourishes there. Neither the military, nor the civilian households at Chundrapore venture to infringe the old established rule of

sending children home before the period of pasty faces and wasting limbs sets in; it is in fact one of the Indian stations at which the hardships and grievances of "Indian marriages," with their choice of evils in the way of separation make themselves most evident. But nobody had ever heard Herbert Rhodes complain of the heat or the rains, of the flatness of the country, or the sickliness of the station, nor had he appeared to suffer from those causes. He had been up to the day of his death—the day on which this story opens—an active, cheerful, indefatigable man, one whose hand had an extraordinary facility for finding things to do, and who did them with all—with, perhaps, a little more than all—his might. This was over now, and Chundrapore had had a blow. On Sunday the chaplain preached to his usual congregation; on Monday, when the members of a catechism class, which he was accustomed to hold on that day, were assembling, an alarming rumour dispersed them. Mr. Rhodes was said to be "down" with cholera, dying; and the rumour fell short of the truth, for the God-fearing, hard-working man was even then gone to his account, with one last entry to his credit, which was talked of among the natives in the station long after Herbert Rhodes's vacant place had been filled.

On returning from the evening service on that last Sunday, the chaplain's attention had been caught by moans proceeding from a little tope near his house, and going quickly towards the sound, he found a very old man, wretchedly poor, and terribly ill, writhing upon the ground. He called for help, but in vain. No one was near, and he raised the sufferer and carried him with immense difficulty to the

hospital. The few persons he encountered while staggering along under his load refused to aid him. The case was hopeless, and the chaplain remained with the old native until the end—nay, more, the Christian minister, finding the troubled mind in the sinking frame disturbed by the pang of poverty that forbade the decent burning of the body, which according to the tenets of the patient's faith is requisite for eternal peace, promised that this should be done, and closed the livid fingers of the dying man over the comforting money that was to purchase the wood to consume him, and to pay for the scattering of his ashes upon Gunga's breast. When the great rest came, and the thin brown hand relaxed its grasp of his merciful alms, that good Samaritan made his way home with a strange chill at his heart, and a strange burning in his skin, and in a few hours he had come up with the ineffable knowledge, whose attainment he had envied the poor old native as he looked at him for the last time, and laid his own white handkerchief over the dark, worn, wrinkled face.

The event had a double significance : an important member of the community was dead, and the cholera was in the station. Not that the latter was a positive novelty—the cholera was more or less about always—but it had brought down a noble victim this time, and it could not be ignored by general consent, as it habitually was when it confined its ravages to the native town and bazaar. The horrible rapidity with which burial follows death in India, aggravating the shock and the agony of parting to the survivors, and tending to produce the general levity and callousness with which it is too often regarded, is one of the most painful experiences which new comers have to undergo. The Two Hundredth Regiment had been only three weeks in cantonments at Chundrapore, and the death of the chaplain was the first example that had occurred since its arrival. The ladies, although they had a general sort of notion that such was the rule, were horrified when they found that all was over in twenty-four hours. The evening of Monday had seen Herbert Rhodes returning to his home, plague-stricken, from the hospital ; the evening of Tuesday saw him laid in his grave.

"It is too, too dreadful," said Mrs. Stephenson, the very pretty but not very wise wife of Captain Stephenson of the newly-arrived regiment, to Mrs. Masters, the wife of a colonel of artillery, who, together with the resident English phy-

sician, Dr. Cunningham, had undertaken to see to the dead man's effects and affairs. "It is too dreadful," she repeated, sniffing strongly at a little ball of camphor which she had held in her hand all day, "and the worst of it is that the poor fellow had no wife to take care of him."

"The worst of it ! I think that is the best of it. No care could have done anything for him, and there is one less to suffer by his death. No, it is bad enough to think of his daughter."

"His daughter ! Had he a daughter ? I thought he was not married ?"

"He was a widower ; his wife died very young, on their voyage out to Calcutta, I believe, but I am not sure. Mr. Rhodes never talked much about himself, and always gave one the impression of thinking as little. Ah !" with a sigh, "we shall not easily replace him."

Mrs. Stephenson left off smelling the ball of camphor, and began to fan herself. The scene of the conversation was Colonel Masters's bungalow, a low roomy building with a wide verandah. The ladies were talking almost in the dark, occupying low cane chairs which were placed on the matting just inside the French windows. A lamp on a table at the back of the room served as a centre of attraction for a little cloud of white and grey moths, and shed a distant light on the two figures in cool muslin gowns. From where they sat they could see the light shining behind the window of a room opposite, which also opened upon the verandah, and could dimly discern two men seated at a table covered with boxes and papers.

Mrs. Masters kept an anxious watch upon the window opposite. The task in which her husband and Dr. Cunningham were engaged was a sad and onerous one. She wished it was over. Anything depressing to the spirits was so bad in times of sickness such as they might now be entering upon ; and Colonel Masters was a sensitive man. Mrs. Stephenson, who was a distant cousin of the colonel's, was their guest for the present, and Mrs. Masters found her rather trying on the actual occasion. The chaplain's death, a real sorrow to his friends who knew his worth, was merely a sensation to Mrs. Stephenson. She had only seen him twice in church, but availed herself of the opportunity of making a fuss, which she loved, and also of protesting against the hardship of having had to come out to India, which she hated.

Mrs. Masters was not inclined to talk ;

she was feeling the events of the day too deeply ; but her friend, who did not feel them except as they unpleasantly ricochetted in the direction of her own apprehensions, sought to soothe fear by letting loose curiosity, and so plied her with questions.

" You and he were great friends, weren't you ? " asked Mrs. Stephenson, resuming the dialogue.

" We saw a good deal of him, and we liked and respected him, as everyone whose goodwill is worth having did also."

" I thought him so good-looking," said Mrs. Stephenson with a kind of rueful retrospective admiration, which would have made Mrs. Masters smile had she not been long past smiling. " and I'm sure he was awfully nice, especially for a clergyman ; they bore one so, you know, in general—I mean when they really are good, and then, when they're not, they are quite too dreadful for anything ; so I don't like them, as a class. But he was a rare exception."

" I hope he was not quite that," said Mrs. Masters gravely ; " but he was a truly good man, most devoted and unselfish. No doubt he had many cares and griefs of his own—that he had one we know—but he never let them appear. He was always ready to share other people's. No one ever so fully realised to my knowledge the aspiration of the poet who prays for

"A heart at leisure from itself, to soothe and sympathise."

Her words were Greek to her hearer, and she knew it ; but it was a relief to her, as she must talk, to speak of their friend as she felt. And all the time there was a thought recurring like the tic-tac of a clock : " He was alive yesterday ; he was alive yesterday."

" What a dear ! " said Mrs. Stephenson, and resumed her camphor-sniffing. " I wonder whether his wife was nice. Who was she ? "

" I don't know. I never heard anything about her family, and I knew very little about herself. He rarely spoke of her ; that was his way ; but he did tell me once that when he saw the photograph of his daughter, which was sent out to him when she was fifteen—just two years ago, by-the-bye—he was startled by the likeness to her mother. He showed me the portrait. The girl must be very handsome."

" A lucky thing for her."

" I am not so sure of that. Beauty is

not always a blessing." Mrs. Stephenson smiled incredulously and securely in the semi-darkness. " A girl without a good provision or powerful friends may easily be too handsome for her own welfare. It is not likely Mr. Rhodes had much to leave to his daughter ; and, as she had been at school ever since her parents came out to India, I should not think she has many friends."

" Had he no private means ? "

" They were very slender, I fancy. His household was the simplest, his expenditure was the smallest possible, and yet nobody ever thought of him as either poor or parsimonious. He could, and did, give always. I hope his orphan daughter may be dealt with by the world in which she is left alone, as gently as Mr. Rhodes dealt with everybody."

" Was he kind to bad people, then ? "

" He was very kind to bad people, though he was not in the least tolerant of bad things. He reversed the usual order ; looked for the good in every human being first, and made as little account as possible of the evil."

" La ! how he must have got imposed on," exclaimed Mrs. Stephenson, whose shallow brain conceived that wisdom and knowingness were identical, and you had only to " always suspect everybody," according to the maxim of the respected father of Mr. Sampson Brass, to always get the better of everybody.

" I daresay he did," said Mrs. Masters in a very dry tone, " but I fancy he did good to some impostors in his time as well, and he would have compounded for that. Are you not tired ? It has been a tiring day."

" Yes, I am tired ; but I am so frightened I don't think I can sleep."

" Had you not better try ? You will not like to lose your morning ride, and you can't go out if you don't sleep."

This home-truth and a timely remembrance of her complexion reduced Mrs. Stephenson to submission ; she retired in the reassuring company of her camphor-ball.

Mrs. Masters returned to her place at the window after she had seen her guest to her room, and, guiltily conscious of a strong desire that the quarters which were in preparation for Captain and Mrs. Stephenson should be made ready without delay, she continued, while sunk in deep and painful thought, to watch the light opposite, and the two figures bending over the table.

Still forming a steady refrain to her meditations, went the tic-tac in her thoughts : "He was alive yesterday ; he was alive yesterday !"

It was close upon dawn when the conference of two broke up, and Dr. Cunningham, taking his leave of Colonel Masters, went away to his own house, having rendered to his old friend the chaplain the last service he could ever do him. Herbert Rhodes had not uttered many coherent sentences between his seizure and his death, but among them had been a prayer that Colonel Masters and Dr. Cunningham should have the arrangement of all his worldly affairs. It was by the doctor's directions that the boxes and papers had been taken up to the colonel's bungalow ; he would not have any but a case-hardened person like himself enter the house in which the chaplain had died, unless it were absolutely necessary.

"A curious mind he must have had," said the doctor to himself, musingly, as he went his way homewards ; "very methodical, very unworldly, very contented. I wonder whether he was at all uneasy about anything he had done—a man of his sort might have such strange scruples—when he muttered three times over : 'Leave thy fatherless children to me, saith the Lord. Am I leaving her to him ? am I leaving her to him ?' Who can tell ? Anyhow, it is a good thing there is only one to be left, with so slender a provision, whether it be to the tender mercies of Heaven or earth."

And then Dr. Cunningham, who, though a good man in his way, was eminently practical, and never wasted either effort or emotion in cases where the one was vain or the other abstract, dismissed the matter from his thoughts. Had it not occupied them almost exclusively for twenty-four hours ?

CHAPTER II. SUBSEQUENT ARRANGEMENTS.

WHEN Colonel Masters joined his wife, she was not unnaturally anxious to learn the general result of the investigation in which he and the doctor had been engaged.

"Sitting up, Margaret ?" said the colonel. "How tired you must be. It is very late."

"I could not sleep. What have you found ? Is there anything like a good provision for the poor girl ?"

"Nothing so far as we have seen, nothing represented by any of Rhodes's papers here.

They are all in perfect order ; it is easy to see that he kept things in readiness to get the route any day, and there are not many of them. His accounts are all made up to last Saturday, and there is not a rupee due here to anyone ; unfortunately, there's very little due to him, and, when expenses are paid, there will not be any money to send home. There's a very small insurance on his life, only five hundred pounds, the sum he alludes to in the memorandum to which he referred Cunningham, and beyond that we can find no trace of any property whatever."

"That memorandum was looked at immediately, was it not ?"

"It was ; on the supposition that it might contain some directions for his funeral. There is, however, nothing of the kind ; it merely states where his papers are to be found, and expresses his wish that as he has no debts, such proceeds of the sale of his personal effects as remain after the payment of his funeral expenses, shall go to the school he helped to establish here. This memorandum occupies only one side of a sheet of letter-paper, and was written a year ago."

"Before he made arrangements for his daughter's coming out to him. Is there nothing more ?"

"Some directions about the disposal of his letters. They are all tied up in neat packets and numbered, and certain are to be burned unread, the others—his wife's, I fancy—are to be forwarded to the same address with a sealed packet directed in his own hand, and recently, to judge by its appearance, which was the first we came upon."

"To what address ?"

"Messrs. Simpson and Rees, solicitors, Lincoln's Inn Fields, who have had, it seems, the management of all his affairs, evidently, never a very onerous charge. They have paid the school bills for his daughter, and sent him a kind of periodical report of her welfare, and there is a letter from them about the arrangements for sending her out, and a copy of his reply. The poor girl would have been starting in about two months."

"Yes. I understood that from him. He was talking of her journey on Saturday morning, and the comparative ease of it, though he felt anxious enough about her."

Mrs. Masters's voice broke, and her tears fell. The colonel walked to and fro thoughtfully.

"It appears from his accounts that he had sent home the needful funds, and that the payments at the school were completed. I cannot tell you, Margaret, how much the preparedness of everything, and a sort of methodical solitariness that there is about it all, impressed me. There is nothing among his papers to prove that Herbert Rhodes had anyone in the world of kin to him except his daughter."

"And I never heard him speak of relations in England."

"He must have been a very lonely man, though he never allowed it to appear."

"And we never thought of it, because he lived so completely in his work, and out of self."

"But it makes the thing all the harder upon the poor girl," said the colonel. "Of course she may have friends in England; though the solicitors' letters don't look much like it; still, her position must be a sad one, even at its unknown best."

"Who is to tell her?" asked Mrs. Masters suddenly, and turning towards her husband with a flushed face.

"I never thought of that," said the colonel. "The death will be telegraphed; there's no avoiding it; she will see it in the papers, or someone will see it and tell her. Poor child!"

"Let me think," said Mrs. Masters; then added after a short pause: "The lady of the school. Would it do to telegraph privately to her, and ask her to break the news to the girl?"

"Of course it would," said the colonel. "I'll do it first thing in the morning. There's a mail on Thursday, the letters can go by that. Come, let us have a look at the children."

As these kind people stood for a minute or two by the side of the cots in which their little daughters were sleeping undisturbed by the visit, which was of regular occurrence, each knew what was the unspoken thought in the mind of the other. Heavenly compassion was at all events a temporary guest in the breast of the parents who had neither friendlessness nor poverty to fear for the beloved slumberers, in any at all to be foreseen event of fate.

Colonel Masters was as good as his word. On the following day the telegraph conveyed in a very brief form the intelligence of Herbert Rhodes's death to Miss Jerdane, at the Hill House, Highgate, London, with the addition "Break news." Then came the winding up of the deceased chaplain's simple affairs, the despatching

of the packets addressed to Messrs. Simpson and Rees; the sale of the humble personal effects; the making of provisional arrangements *par qui de droit* for the fulfilment of the duties of the chaplaincy; and in a surprisingly short space of time the closing of the incident.

Mrs. Stephenson was much relieved when all these things were accomplished. The affair began to bore her so soon as her alarm began to subside. It seemed that nobody else outside the native town was going to die of cholera just then, and her pretty terrors did not excite so much attention as she could have wished. It was very dull at Colonel Masters's, and she should be very anxious to see the new chaplain. India was a dreadful place, and she envied Mrs. Masters her delightful prospect of getting back to England after only one more year of it.

"You envy me what I dread most in the world," said Mrs. Masters, when her guest gave peevish utterance to these sentiments: "separation from Arthur. I shall have to bear it for the children's sake; but the less I think of it, and the less other people discuss it in the meantime, the better."

And yet it was the "feather-headed" Mrs. Stephenson, as her cousin, Colonel Masters, rather contemptuously called her when privately commenting upon her to his wife, who suggested that a photograph of the tomb which was erected by subscription to the memory of Herbert Rhodes should be taken and sent to his daughter. Mrs. Stephenson did not subscribe to the fund raised for the erection of the tomb; she was quite a new comer, she said, and had hardly known Mr. Rhodes. Yet this apparent inconsistency did not surprise Colonel Masters. He had never, he said, known Christina deficient in inexpensive sentiment. The tombstone was erected, the photograph was taken, and sent to the dead man's daughter, at Miss Jerdane's, with a letter written by Mrs. Masters, in which that lady expressed her intention of making Miss Rhodes's acquaintance on her not far-distant visit to England: so far had Mrs. Masters improved on the suggestion of Mrs. Stephenson. Neither the letter nor the photograph reached the hands for which they were intended, but it was long ere that became known to the kind senders.

Time went on with steady inexorability at Chundrapore as elsewhere. The provisional arrangement for the fulfilment of the duties of the chaplaincy was succeeded

by the advent of a new regularly appointed chaplain, who presented a striking contrast to Herbert Rhodes in most respects; and differed from him in none more saliently than in the fact of his numerous and important connections in England, and his readiness to descend upon them. There were no "silences" about the Rev. Richard Kellett, and there was no mystery except that of the explanation of so high and mighty a divine's accepting so comparatively insignificant a post as the chaplaincy, which no one had ever thought of regarding as otherwise than a fitting post for Herbert Rhodes.

From the dead man's daughter, no sign reached his friends at Chundrapore. The receipt of the packet of letters was duly acknowledged by Messrs. Simpson and Rees, but that was all—at least of direct communication, bearing on the matter of the chaplain's death. A month after that event, Dr. Cunningham drew the attention of Colonel Masters to a paragraph in one of the London papers, arrived by the last mail, in which the failure of the Infallible Life Assurance Company, for an enormous sum, and under very discreditable circumstances, was announced, with much denunciatory editorial comment.

"Look here," said the doctor; "the Infallible was the office poor Rhodes was insured in, was it not?"

"By Jove! so it was," asserted the colonel.

"Then it went just at the time of his death."

The two men exchanged rueful looks, and shook their respective heads gravely.

SOMETHING ABOUT OYSTERS.

ALTHOUGH the oyster can claim no gift of humour in itself, it has nevertheless been the occasion of wit in others. By a careful examination of the digestive, circulating, and reproductive organs of an oyster, and its nervous system being equally cared for, we may be led to infer that "an oyster crossed in love" is not so mythical a notion as is generally supposed. And although it does not rank amongst the highly gifted of creation, its sensibilities are not so obscure, or its instincts so limited, as has for ages been supposed. Indeed, we are told that if they cannot laugh they can yawn, which they do, equal to Dr. Watts's sluggard, after awaking from sleep in their beds, while learned naturalists assure us

that the enjoyments of the oyster are not so few and unvaried as at a first glance we might deem them to be. The performance of every function with which they are endowed brings with it as much pleasure and happiness as their organisation admits of; in the gentle agitation of the water which floats around them, in its varied temperature, in the work of capturing their microscopic prey, in the inhibition and expulsion of the food necessary to respiration, &c., they must find both business and amusement; and in the due season, love visits even these phlegmatic beings, whose "icy bosom feels the secret fire."

And although it has been doubted that an oyster had been so far subjugated as to "follow its master up and down stairs," a consummation which might be accepted as positive progressive steps in the rise towards ultimate civilisation, at least according to Lewes Sea Side Studies, oysters are susceptible of being educated to a small extent. In the great establishments on the coast of Calvados, the merchants teach oysters to keep their shells closed when out of the water, by which means the liquor retained keeps their gills moist, and they arrive lively in far distant Paris. The process may be worthy extensive publicity; it is this: no sooner is an oyster taken from the sea than it closes its shells, and opens them after a certain time—from fatigue, it is said, but more probably because the shock it received by removal into the air, causing its muscles to contract, has passed away. The Calvados men take advantage of this to exercise the oysters, and make them accustomed to be out of water, by leaving them daily in the atmosphere for longer and longer periods. This has the desired effect; the well-educated mollusc keeps its door closed at last for many consecutive hours, and so long as the shell is closed its gills are kept moist.

"Oysters," says old Fuller, "are the only meat which men eat alive, and yet account it no cruelty," and King James was wont to say, "he was a very valiant man who first ventured on eating of oysters." But the taste may have been accidentally inculcated after the manner of the discovery of the super-excellence of roast pig, related by Charles Lamb. We all know now that it did not require

a man with palate covered o'er
With brass or steel that on the rocky shore
First broke the oyster's pearly coat,
And risked the living morsel down his throat.

Who this envied mortal was it is difficult at this date to determine, but that oysters stood gastronomically high as early as 40 B.C., appears from the fragments of Agatharcides preserved by Photius, in which we are told of the people wandering along the shores of the Arabian Gulf in search of shell-fish to put in stews, to fatten them ready for food in times of scarcity. It does not follow that shell-fish included oysters, but it is not likely that so sapid a kind would be passed over, and if once experimented upon, not found amongst the products of the coast suited to the table.

In the window of a well-known oyster shop, near the Strand, may be observed the twin shells of a species of oyster of prodigious size and some hundred pounds in weight. This monster may partly explain the transatlantic "bull" of the Yankee that on a certain coast he had seen oysters so large that it "took two men to swallow one whole." But still more surprising must have been the efforts with pick-axe and crow-bar to burglariously enter the house of such a Brobdingnagian bivalve through such a pair of formidable shutters; even that ogre-like devourer of the oyster—the dread of oyster salesmen—Dando, who "took in" both the natives and the seller, would have trembled agape had he had such a task before him.

We have it well authenticated that there have existed many eminent men who were of opinion that a "few oysters" before dinner gave a zest to the appetite. There have likewise been those who, eating three or four dozen for a like purpose, declared that their appetite was no better than when they commenced. The ancients, like ourselves, were in the habit of taking oysters as a prelude to their dinner.

British oysters were first brought to the notice of Roman gourmets in the time of Agrippa (A.D. 78). Having introduced among the inhabitants of these islands the civilisation of Rome, Agrippa afterwards imported to Rome the oysters of Britain. The far-famed Rutupians were taken from the shores of Kent in the neighbourhood of Richborough, and appear to have been thoroughly appreciated. Juvenal, satirising the gastronomic excesses so prevalent in his time, alludes to our "natives":

And in our days none understood so well
The science of good eating; he could tell,
At the first relish, if his oysters fed
On the Rutupian, or the Lucrine bed:
And from a crab or lobster's colour, name
The country—nay, the district, whence it came.

Macrobius, the grammarian, has given

us the bill of fare of the sumptuous banquet which was given when L. Cornelius Lentulus (B.C. 50) was installed as Flamen of Mars by L. J. Cæsar, the augur, which so far as scholasts have hitherto translated the passage, tells us: "Before dinner, sea urchins, raw oyster ad libitum, pelorides, spondile, the fish turdus, asparagus. Next course: fat fowls, oyster-patties, pelorides, black and white balani. Next course: spondyle, glycomarides, sea-anemones, beccaficos," &c., &c. Juvenal, likewise alluding to Venus Ebria, says:

Who at deep midnight on fat oysters sups,
And froths with unguents her Falernian cups.

Of all devourers of oysters, Vitellius—"the beastly Vitellius" as Gibbon calls him—appears to have been the most insatiate; being credited with having eaten them all day long, and with having swallowed as many as a thousand at a sitting. Upon this a writer in the Quarterly remarks, that though there must be exaggeration here, many contemporary evidences appear somewhat to confirm the fact. Seneca was a detractor of the oyster, denouncing "oysters and mushrooms as things which cannot properly be called food, but mere provocatives of the appetite, causing those who are already full to eat more, a something, no doubt, very pleasant to gluttons."

Mr. Bertram, in his Harvest of the Sea, tells us that in all countries there are records of the excessive fondness of great men for oysters. Cervantes was an oyster-eater, and he satirised the oyster-dealers of Spain; Louis the Eleventh, careful lest scholarship should become defunct in France, feasted the learned doctors of the Sorbonne once a year on oysters; and another Louis invested his cook with an order of nobility as a reward for his oyster cookery. Napoleon also was an oyster lover, so was Rousseau, and Turgot used to eat a hundred or two just to raise a zest for breakfast. Invitations to a dish of oysters were common in the literary and artistic circles of Paris at the latter end of last century. The Encyclopædist were particularly fond of oysters. Helvetius, Diderot, the Abbé Raynal, Voltaire, and others, were confirmed oyster men. Before the Revolution the violent politicians were in the habit of constantly frequenting the Parisian oyster-shops; and Danton, Robespierre, and others, were fond of oysters in their days of innocence. Cambacérès was famous for his shell-fish banquets. Not many years ago, before oysters rose to

prohibitory prices, excepting among the wealthy, the consumption of oysters in Paris, in the official statistics, reached the enormous total of one million a day.

Among our English celebrities, Alexander Pope was an oyster-eater of taste, and so was Dean Swift. Thomson, of *The Seasons*, who knew all good things, knew how good a thing an oyster was. The learned Dr. Richard Bentley could never pass an oyster-shop without having a few. Gay appears to have succumbed to the same attraction :

Where oyster tubs in rows
Are ranged behind the posts, there stay thy
haste;

and Blomfield, the Bishop of London, declared that the sight of an oyster-stall, common in his day, always made his mouth water. The Scottish philosophers, too, of the last century—Hume, Dugald Stewart, Cullen, &c.—used frequently to indulge in the “whiskered pandores” of their generation. “Oyster-plays,” as they were called, were frequently held in the quaint and dingy taverns of the old town of Edinburgh. Oysters were then but sixpence a score, and of the primest description, and they were obtainable in shops in Leith Walk even at a cheaper rate. This oyster tavern was not, as most others were, underground, but upon a level with the court or close in which it was situated. But those in the cellar floor, which Mr. Bertram mentions in his *Harvest of the Sea*, were frequented even in the course of the long winter evenings by carriage and quality ladies and gentlemen folk, who descended to partake of oysters and bottled porter, plenteously, but rudely served. To learn what Professor North’s high estimation of the oyster was, his *Noctes Ambrosianæ* may be referred to.

The notion that an oyster is dead as soon as it is opened is a fallacious one, and the theory that consequently the swallower of raw oysters is not guilty of the ferocity of eating them alive is equally untenable. When

The damsel’s knife the gaping shell commands,
And the salt liquor streams between her hands ;
if the operation be clean and deftly done,
the animal is still alive, as no vital part has
been touched by the blade, as may be
shown by placing an oyster thus deprived
of its flat shell under a few inches of sea-
water, when the movements of its several
parts may be observed. It is, therefore,
clear that the creature, if not previously

masticated, is swallowed alive. When under intelligent observation, it will be seen that the creature, which when fairly opened, scarce looks like a living animal until carefully spread out by the knife, from the touch of which it does not shrink, is, although without head and brains, possessed of a mouth, stomach, and intestinal tract. We must look for the mouth near the hinge, and it is concealed by the folds of the mantle and the two pairs of labial laminated tentacles. The mouth is a simple transverse orifice, without teeth or any triturating organ, and leads almost immediately into the stomach. And has this hybrid production, according to Galen between animals and plants, no other physical and anatomical properties to boast of ? Yes ; it has further a liver, and a heart—indeed, it has two hearts about the size of peas, which may be seen to pulsate slowly and somewhat irregularly ; and this double organ consists of an auricle and ventricle, the contraction of which sends the blood through the entire system. The gills, or beard, consist of two pairs of membranous plates, beautifully striated and floating within the cavity of the shell. Microscopists tell us that if a small portion of the gill be placed on a slip of glass with a little sea-water, and viewed under a power of about three hundred, a beautiful spectacle will be seen ; the thousands of tiny cilia lash the water incessantly, thus causing fresh currents of water to aerate the blood which flows through the branchial vessels. Yet withal this perfection of organisation, is the oyster an incomprehensible creature :

It wears a beard without any chin,
And gets out of bed to be tucked in.

Amongst the enemies of the oyster, enumerated by the late Mr. Buckland, are the whelk, star-fish, and sand, a drift of the latter having destroyed miles of valuable oyster beds and the “spat,” as the spawn and young are called, in a single night. Punch is eloquently poetical upon this subject in the following lament :

‘Tis the voice of the oyster, I hear him complain :
I can’t live in this place, here’s the sand-storm
again,
I was settling to rest ‘mid the rocks and the tiles
They had made for a home, but this sand, how it
riles !

It gets into my shell and the delicate fringe
That I use when I breathe ; and I can’t shut my
hinge
When the grit lodges there ; so the crabs come at
will ;
Since my poor mouth is open they feed and they
kill.

I've complained to a friend, who quite understands,
But he can't undertake to abolish the sands.
Thus the native made moan, tho' I took up the brown
Bread and butter and lemon and swallowed him down.

Brown bread and butter, lemon, and cayenne are the orthodox concomitants to oysters, washed down with chablis, in London and Paris. We prefer the more humble porter or stout, not for economy only, but for choice. A peculiar kind of bread was, by the ancients, eaten with oysters, called by Pliny "panis ostrearius," but in what its peculiarity consisted we are not told. Apicius gives the following recipe for cooking oysters: (1) Pepper, lovage, the yolk of an egg, vinegar, liquor from oysters, oil, and wine; you may add honey if you like. (2) Oysters seasoned with cummin, pepper, lovage, parsley, dry mint, malobathrum leaves, cummin in greater proportion, honey, vinegar, and oyster liquor. Honey and oysters!

Most people, we believe, swallow or "bolt" the dainty mollusc, but one authority maintains that this is a mistake, holding that the oyster has a much finer flavour, and it is far more nourishing, when well masticated. We are asked whether any true disciple of Apicius would swallow an oyster as he would a pill; if so, he almost deserves the fate of the celebrated City chronometer-maker, who was choked with one. The swindler, Dando, certainly did this, but he characteristically completed his task by bolting himself. Dr. Kitchen writes: "Those who wish to enjoy this delicious restorative in its utmost perfection, should eat it the moment it is opened, with its own gravy, in the under shell; if not eaten absolutely alive, its flavour and spirit are lost. The true lover of an oyster will have some regard to the feelings of his little favourite, and contrive to detach the fish from the shell dexterously, that the oyster is hardly conscious he has been ejected from his lodgings till he feels the teeth of the piscivorous gourmet tickling him to death."

An anonymous writer in the Quarterly, says: "It is our practice to abjure a fork," suggesting that the oyster should be lifted affectionately with the tongue into its human sarcophagus.

The use of a fork may be dispensed with, but on a memorable occasion at which we were present in Holstein, the absence of a knife lost a wager of one hundred pounds. A well-known English oyster-

eater was boasting that he believed that he could "polish off" a tub of oysters at a sitting, when a gentleman present offered to bet him the above sum that he could not eat oysters quicker than the challenger could open them. The wager was accepted and conditions formally drawn up. The first oyster was duly opened and presented to the consumer, who, in the attempt to get it into his mouth, found it was not detached from the shell, and he looked around in vain for a knife; they had all been removed, and his teeth were not sufficiently of a forward nature to permit his getting them between the oyster and the shell.

WHITE VIOLETS.

THE children of her Sabbath school
Plucked them in valleys green and cool,
Before the dew was dry;
And now beside her book of prayer,
Fanned softly by the April air,
The tender blossoms lie.

How fresh they are! how fit to rest
Upon her happy girlish breast,
To nestle in her hair;
White symbols of her sheltered life,
That blooms untouched by worldly strife,
Uncrossed by worldly care.

They seem to cling with conscious love
To broderied kerchief, dainty glove,
Dropped in her pretty haste
To greet the world-worn weary man,
Who, lingering near her for a span,
Doth purest pleasure taste.

I watch her guide with tendance sweet
Her aged father's tottering feet
Along the terraced way;
I watch her face—and sigh the while—
The candid brow, the frank, free smile
Of maiden in her May.

The peacock screams his quaint delight,
The hounds bound forward in her sight,
The kitten follows nigh,
The doves coo softly at her call,
Dear queen and lady of them all—
Now wherefore do I sigh?

It were as meet that I should take
These violets white, and strive to slake
A furnace with their dew,
As seek to link into my life
Of passionate unrest and strife
This maiden sweet and true.

It were as meet that I should ask
A saint to share my worldly task,
As speak of love to her,
Within whose spirit clear and white,
Attuned to innocent delight,
The childish pulses stir.

I touch her kerchief and her glove—
I might have power to fill with love
Her young untainted heart;
Pass on, my white wood violet!
God give thee love without regret,
And joy without a smart;

For not with me do these abide:
A life so wrecked by passion's tide
I dare not offer thee;
Fulfil thy life with happy hours,
At peace among thy birds and flowers,
Thou art too pure for me!

ANOTHER BIRTHDAY IN BOERLAND.

IN a former paper I spoke of the birth of the first purely British subject who had entered the world at our little township of Utrecht in the Transvaal, and I attempted some slight sketch of the festivities with which the small garrison at that time assembled there endeavoured to celebrate the event.

From the birthday of one of the Queen's lieges to the fête of Her Majesty herself, is a transition of ideas that will naturally occur to such of Her Majesty's loyal subjects as were condemned to serve in that most hopelessly barren and dreary quarter.

It does not require any very severe effort of memory to recall all the few red-letter days which served to mark the monotony of life, as we lay for months encamped upon an arid plain, whose sandy waste extended in one direction for six-and-twenty miles, unrelieved by a single tree; and where we bit our thumbs in all the utter depression of enforced inaction, sans work, sans play, sans sport, sans everything.

As I have already said, the enthusiasm with which all, to a man, woman, and child, pounced upon the faintest excuse for the exceedingly mild and ginger-beer sort of dissipation, which was all that we were able to compass, had something positively pathetic in it.

It is affecting to recollect the ardour wherewith we congratulated one another upon the recurrence of the dates of our respective wedding-days; how we wrung hands as the anniversaries of "joining the regiment" came to each in turn; how we were almost melted to tears as we reminded one another of our first parades, of the errors into which inexperience had then betrayed us, of the numbers of downfalls which we had (or had not) escaped from the obstinate persistence of our swords in getting between our legs, with other incidents of a like moving character. The ladies of the garrison, too (from their own account), followed suit by comparing their innocent experiences, giving one another minute accounts of each courtship, proposal, and wedding, with ample details as to "what he said" and "what she said," upon every one of those momentous occasions, until the fullest confidence upon the most interesting of topics must have prevailed amongst the married portion of the community.

While the slightest pretexts for breaking through the routine of life were thus greedily seized upon, the more than ordinary excitement with which we viewed the approach of the 24th of May will be easily understood. The little camp was kept in a perfect fever of loyal enthusiasm for weeks beforehand. And when the date upon which it had been determined to hold the official commemoration proper to the royal birthday transpired, schemes and suggestions as to the most befitting way of celebrating the day, and of impressing the natives with the magnitude of the occasion, poured in like a hailstorm on the authorities from all quarters.

In justice to these worthies it must be admitted that they displayed a long-suffering and forbearance worthy of so great a cause. Proposals even the wildest and most preposterous were certain at any rate of a hearing, though they usually ended in smoke, from the authors having overlooked the fact that the materials for carrying them into execution were unhappily conspicuous by their absence.

It was for this reason we were compelled to abandon the really magnificent project of sending up a fire-balloon inscribed with a suitable legend, it having been discovered that the Commissariat Department at Utrecht did not keep an assortment of these machines in store, and that it would be necessary to send a special messenger to Maritzburg, and possibly to England, to procure one. The idea of a ball was also given up after a protracted sitting of the Committee of Ways and Means, at which many intricate calculations were made, and much solid thinking expended. The fact was not at first realised that there were only five English ladies in the garrison; they, too, positively declined to patronise any entertainment in which the Dutch Boeresses were to participate, alleging that at the dances periodically given by these gentry, windows were kept rigorously closed, smoking—and smoking, ye gods, of Boer tobacco!—was permitted, and the proceedings invariably wound up with kiss-in-the-ring.

Picnics were not to be thought of, our life being one perpetual picnic. The daily al fresco boiling of kettles and watching of pots soon loses the slight interest which its very incongruity with the surroundings of civilisation imparts to this occupation at home; and when one's kitchen consists merely of sods laid on the ground, and is

liable at any moment to be swept off the face of the earth by a dust-storm, the delight of cooking one's own chops with one's own hands is so largely mingled with anxiety as to be deprived of half its charms. The last of these schemes, consisting of the inevitable banquet, whereat every tinned and native luxury was to be made to do duty for some home delicacy—a device which only rendered the absence of English comforts more painfully conspicuous—was only resigned by its authors after a hard struggle. It was with a sense of relief that the older and more dyspeptic members of our corps learnt that their digestions were to be saved the wear and tear of more than ordinarily gruesome compounds, and that the usual field-day and march-past were to constitute (as became a military community) the most prominent feature in the day's entertainment.

In making our preparations for the eventful day one fruitful source of anxiety at home was spared, as the climate of the Transvaal possesses the advantage of enabling one to foretell the weather, and secure a fine day weeks in advance. But it must be admitted that this advantage is almost the solitary one, and the variations of temperature in the twenty-four hours more than compensate for the absence of the storms and unsettled weather of our cloudy island. The contrast between the comparative chill of the nights and the burning heat of the days is one of its peculiarities most especially trying to Europeans, and proves a more fruitful source of fever and dysentery than all the bad waters of all the unsanitary camps that were ever pitched. The steady wind that for certain months in the year is perpetually blowing across the Transvaal, passes almost unnoticed in the full blaze of the sun, but a few moments spent under the shade of a wall gives one the effect of a drench in a bath of ice-cold water with one's clothes on. Hence it is easy to enjoy the luxury of sitting in the shade, enveloped in great-coats and rugs, watching a fellow-mortal half-a-dozen yards off toiling in the sun with the perspiration streaming down his face.

The most grilling day in the Long Valley at Aldershot would give no idea of the sweltering endured by Her Majesty's subjects in the attempt to do her honour beneath a South African sun.

The morning of the 27th dawned deliciously, as all days do in South

Africa, and the sun soon routed the sharp frost which had made us shiver in our blanket-bags during the night, and draw an extra rug over our beds for comfort's sake. By nine o'clock the tents were simply ovens, and we were glad to take advantage of the shadow they cast as we sat at breakfast and watched the preparations which had been going on from dawn. But though the camp was early astir and humming like a hive of bees, the town had made no attempt to second our exertions. It is true that the phlegmatic Hollanders had closed their stores, either from a wish to do honour to the occasion, or out of deference to the feelings of their customers, and were strolling about with their gaily-dressed daughters and little tubs of wives.

But the Boers, whom these loyal demonstrations were specially designed to impress, held themselves pointedly aloof from taking even a passive part in the proceedings, and, as they assembled in little knots at the corners of the streets, wore even more than their ordinary glum and lowering expression of countenance.

Their behaviour on this particular occasion caused us to marvel for the hundredth time at the utter, and as it appeared to us, the wilful ignorance respecting the disaffection of these people which prevailed in high places at home. The contrast between the smiling and good-tempered Kafir, easily amenable to authority and accustomed to discipline, whom we were there to subdue, and the turbulent and independent Boer, whose quarrel we were ostensibly espousing, could not fail to strike even the least observant of us in an almost ludicrous light.

"Can they possibly know," we could not help saying to each other, "anything of the real character of this people? Can they realise the sullen reluctance with which they bow their necks to the very light yoke we are imposing on them? What were the colours employed to paint the relief of the grateful Boer upon finding himself taken under our protecting wing, when his loyal ardour could find no other vent than in a determined attempt to pull down the British flag upon the first occasion of its waving over our new territory? What," we asked one another, "could have been the euphemisms used to describe this proceeding, in such a manner as to tickle agreeably the ear of the nation?"

Certainly it requires a fine diplomatic intelligence to recognise the merits of the

Boer when considered in the light of a fellow-subject, and his personal attractions are of a kind which is apt to diminish and disappear altogether when subjected to the test of individual acquaintance.

There is a natural refinement and high-breeding about the Kafir which, notwithstanding the frequent visits of the ladies of our party to the neighbouring kraals, prevented them from ever being betrayed into a single act of incivility, or even the exhibition of rude curiosity; whereas the nature of the Boer frequently displayed itself in a positively offensive coarseness of manner and conversation.

A notable instance of this occurs to my mind in connection with an excursion which was undertaken by a party from the camp, in response to a pressing invitation from one of these gentry.

As is customary, the visitors were regaled with oranges, plum cake, syrup-like coffee, and strong waters, according to their respective sexes; and conversation was carried on mainly by dumb-show, with an occasional reference to an Anglo-Dutch Bible to help it over a more than usually stiff linguistic fence. A couple of hours is considered barely sufficient for a morning call in Boerland, and, as the afternoon wore on, the good dopper became more and more enamoured of the personal attractions of one of his lady visitors. Her blooming complexion and fresh English beauty were descanted on for the benefit of a number of Boer neighbours, who had dropped in to join the party. And though the language in which these criticisms were couched was only partially intelligible to us, the general tenor of them was rendered sufficiently obvious by the eloquent gestures with which they were accompanied. And by the time the "square-oh," flavoured with aniseed, had ebbed in its high-shouldered bottle, the host had wound up by recommending the object of his flattering remarks in marriage to one of his young Boer friends "about to settle;" altogether ignoring, or having overlooked the fact, that the lady in question was a wife already.

Arguments having entirely failed to induce our host to regard this obstacle in anything approaching a serious light, and the husband not being present to put in his claim in person, a retreat was sounded, and we withdrew, pretty Mrs. Chose almost suffocated with laughter, which broke out, peal after peal, as we made our way back to the camp.

Meanwhile, it is the Queen's Birthday, and our little army is marching through the ant-hills and dongas, which considerably interfere with the regularity of their "fours," on their way to the parade-ground. A thicket of blue-gum trees, with their dull leaves and stems all twisted like corkscrews, breaks the teeth of the insidious wind, and the Union Jack droops almost motionless at the saluting base. Half-a-dozen Boers, mounted on their sturdy ponies, assemble at the corners of the ground, and stolidly watch our little band deploying into line; possibly with the view of gaining a wrinkle by witnessing our manœuvres. It does, indeed, require a mustering of all one's British egotism, to imagine that the handling of such a sprinkling of men as we are able to bring on to the ground could convey a much more awe-inspiring impression to the mind of even the most timorous and faint-hearted Boer, than would be produced by the crowing of the bantam-cocks of his own farm-yard.

From the rising ground behind, it looks as if a pocket-handkerchief would more than cover the entire spectacle—the thin red line (here so very thin!), the motley crowd of Dutch and Hottentots, amongst whom lithé Kafirs unencumbered with clothes, barring a string or two of cow-tails, or an old red jacket worn for purposes of display, slip in and out.

And now the proceedings open with the feu-de-joie, inevitable commencement of a birthday parade. Crack! crack! down the front rank and up the rear rank, upon which the mettlesome steeds bestriden by the Boers one after another turn tail and make for the open veldt. It requires all the habits of discipline to suppress roars of laughter at the curious exhibition presented by this string of John Gilpins, as they disappear, each in his turn, thrown well forward on the necks of their horses, their exceedingly baggy pantaloons blown out to their fullest extent, and their broad-brimmed sugar-loaf hats spinning like so many tops over the plain. But the Boer is a good horseman, and, though some of them had to return hatless, they all resumed their position in a body under the gum-trees, and watched the march-past with their usual air of imperturbability. Clouds of dust which would have done credit to the Long Valley rose into the air, exasperating the temper of Tommy Atkins, and imparting an extra hoarseness to his loyal cheers.

Alas! how sadly has even that little band had its ranks thinned since then! To us on the spot it really seemed as if the impending campaign was only the feverish nightmare of over-anxious politicians, and so greatly was the strength of our future enemy underrated, that one of the most successful leaders in the Zulu War assured the writer of his positive conviction that, even if the campaign ever commenced—which he doubted—the whole thing would be quashed by a mere military promenade through the country.

After other entertainments, which largely partook of the civilian element, the demonstrations were concluded by a monster bonfire at the camp, round which the whole garrison assembled; and while the flames flared and roared, and lighted up the uniforms of the men and white dresses of the ladies, we drank Her Majesty's health in some excellent punch, and listened to the somewhat dreary minstrelsy of Tommy Atkins.

As one by one the vocalists were named by their comrades, and stepped out into the weird light, we tried to forget that we had heard *The Little Log Cabin in the Lane*, or *Silver Bells of Memory*, diligently practised any number of times the last few nights at the canteen. The beautiful sentiment expressed in the following lines :

Sure I cannot stay here,
For I feel very queer.
Take me home to my mother,
My father and brother, &c.,

met with a burst of sympathy, and the song would doubtless have been demanded had it consisted of anything less than forty or fifty stanzas.

Round the fire, too, were discussed the arrangements for a shoot to take place at the farm of a wealthy Boer, who had given a general and most pressing invitation to the whole garrison, ladies included, after having been himself entertained at the mess at lunch. His invitation had been couched in terms which admirably set forth that frank good-breeding and delicacy for which his race is so famous.

" You can all come," quoth he, waving a dingly paw with sublime vagueness in the direction of the tents. " I am a rich man, plenty oxen. I can buy you all up. Come and bring your wives. What does it matter to me how many of you come? "

There was, of course, no declining an invitation thus gracefully expressed; but as this happened to be the dopper under whose roof one of the ladies had been so cavalierly disposed of en second noces, the

whole of them were unanimous in refusing to join the party, either being resigned to making the best of their present partners, or not relishing the prospect of hearing their personal merits appraised, with the odious comparisons which might reasonably be expected to accompany such criticisms.

And, in coming to this decision, it should be said that the ladies displayed all their wonted discretion, as we were fain to admit upon a general comparing of notes at the end of the day's sport, when an opinion by no means favourable to deer-stalking, as practised under Boer auspices, was arrived at without a dissentient voice. Those of us who had been indulging themselves with visions of herds of harte-beeste, rede-boke, or even a possible troop of gnu, felt, as they subsequently confessed, dirt-cheap when their exertions in toiling all day, under a broiling sun, through grass as high as their heads, and over loose boulders with a sprained ankle in every one of them, ended in bringing them within shot of half-a-dozen miserable spring-boke, very little bigger than hares. Others, whose expectations had been on a more moderate scale, were resigned to the prospect of having the day's sport remain a unique experience. The proceedings opened with breakfast at the farm, consisting of leathery steaks, euphemistically christened "slab" by the soldiers, swimming in strong grease, the inevitable sickly-sweet coffee, and oranges to follow. At the shooting rendezvous, whither we rode escorted by a very small, very active Kafir boy, and followed by a band of eager "Tommies," who had obtained leave to join the expedition in the capacity of beaters, we found two or three young Boers and Kafirs awaiting us. These last, looking in the pink of condition, carried sheaves of their light throwing assegais, and had in charge a collection of rough-haired mongrel dogs of the lurcher sort, very tall and bony, but evidently thoroughly up to all that was required of them. Our ponies scrambled up the hill-side like cats, and soon landed us on the "high veldt," whence a magnificent view of hills, rearing their heads rank after rank, spread before us on all sides.

The Kafirs now extend in line, with dogs well to heel and assegais at the poise. Their movements are obviously embarrassed by the soldiers, who, as soon as they recover from having been thoroughly pumped at the hill, show a disposition to rush wildly about in all directions, and manifest the greatest reluctance to submit to the

guidance of their better-instructed black brethren. After what we are beginning to think will be an endless pilgrimage up one hill-side and down another, a few bucks are descried careering off in the distance. Suddenly an animal which few of us would recognise as a deer, were it not for the wild chorus of shouts which its appearance provokes, starts up almost from under our feet.

Maniacal yells follow from the soldiers and Kafirs, and a general discharge of all guns within possible or impossible range, whereupon the dogs get loose and pull down the quarry amidst a universal excitement for which the utter insignificance of the wretched little beast seems to offer a very poor excuse.

The adventure terminated, there is a general adjournment for lunch, and the deer having been "gralloched" on the spot the Kafirs draw round the fire with the offal, which had fallen to their portion, and after throwing it on the pile and burning it first on one side and then on the other, knock off the ashes and proceed to devour their smoky tit-bits with admirable appetite.

In the afternoon it must be confessed that sport rather flags, both by reason of the paucity of game, and the irrepressible excitement of the soldiers, who scare away whatever deer there may happen to be by their uncontrollable propensity to shout on the slightest provocation, or even on no provocation at all.

But after all, when we consider the ineffable dulness of their lives, one cannot feel surprised if they did take a little extra advantage of blowing off the steam, whenever a rare opportunity for doing so presented itself.

The general conduct of the men was most exemplary. Week succeeded week with the same dreary routine of parades, fatigues, and sentry-go, and though desertions became not unfrequent as time went on, many of these appeared mainly attributable to restlessness and love of change. Several of the runaways, after a few days' aimless wanderings amongst the hills and Kafir villages, returned of their own accord, and "threw themselves on the mercy of the court."

But besides these victims of ennui, there were other offenders of a more determined character, who had joined the regiment as volunteers, clearly with the sole idea of getting a free passage out. These seized the first opportunity of making their escape, either with the view of reaching the gold-fields, or of finding a harbour of refuge in the Orange Free State, whose

mountains, easily discernible from Utrecht, offered a perpetual temptation to men of this class. Once over the border, the popular theory was that justice could not overtake the offenders. Whether this was actually the case, or whether the idea arose from the fact that their extradition was not worth the trouble and expense that would have attended it, I have no means of judging; but certain it is that several of the best artisans in the regiment went off, in the hope of their talents meeting with a better recognition in the Free State, where skilled labour is at a premium. The resolution with which many of them carried this purpose into effect, and the amount of hardship they must have consequently endured, would have done credit to the negroes on a plantation of the typical Legree order.

Perhaps the most notable specimen of a determined deserter was to be found in the person of T—, one of the volunteers who had joined us under the circumstances above mentioned. This gentleman—who, by the way, was the man whose filial piety had elicited much applause on the night of the bonfire—was in many ways a remarkable character. Long before his roving propensities developed themselves, his extraordinary abilities had made him a marked man in the regiment. His drolleries on board ship, and ingenious devices for lightening the tedium of a voyage, kept the troop-deck alive; and many a night the word was passed, at the request of the ladies, for the musical talent to come aft, that the quarter-deck might enjoy the quaint ditties, liberally interspersed with improvisations, of Private T—. The zealous performance of his duties soon procured him his lance stripe, and before we had landed many weeks, Corporal T— appeared to be imbued with a larger measure of esprit de corps than many of the oldest soldiers in the regiment. In fact, so far had his smartness and little accomplishments advanced him in the good graces of the corps, that it positively seemed to have sustained a loss, and even the ladies felt they had been deprived of a plaything, when one morning the brilliant corporal was reported absent.

After a smart chase, the runaway was captured and relegated to the guard-tent, where, stripped of his factitious virtues, he stood revealed in his true colours, as arrant a scoundrel as ever breathed to await his trial. Even there, his cleverness stood him in good stead, and, by his exemplary

conduct and amusing ways, he soon insinuated himself into the good opinion of his gaolers. So successful was he, that one fine moonlight night the news was spread that the prisoner had effected his escape, having used the very prudent precaution of taking his janitor along with him. Nothing more was ever heard of either, beyond the fact that the sergeant protested that he heard the ringing of a rifle on the ground, and, looking out, saw two figures stealing away in the moonlight. In spite of an immediate chase being organised, Kafir runners, and even dogs, being called into requisition, not a trace of the fugitives was ever discovered.

Strange rumours soon became current in the camp, that the corporal, finding the company of his benefactor somewhat irksome, had taken the shortest way to rid himself of it, and that the victim's spirit had returned to haunt the scene of his misconduct. Be that as it may, whether someone was playing a trick, or whether it was an instance of the not uncommon superstition of soldiers, certain it is that the most extraordinary stories obtained credence, and the men preferred to go about in twos and threes after dark.

With the expiring flames of our bonfire died the last effort we had energy to make to relieve the tedium of existence. Many months had still to pass, during which we were compelled to discuss the very small-beer of our life, and make what wry faces we chose at its flatness. Anyone can understand the relief, the glow of excitement when reinforcements at length reached our little camp, and bustle and preparation for service in the field usurped the place of our former inaction.

I will venture to say there was not one man who did not rejoice from the bottom of his heart, when the order at last came to march in the direction whither during nine weary months our faces had been turned, and where night after night we had watched the grass-fires twinkle like stars on the mountains of Zululand.

VISITED ON THE CHILDREN. BY THEO GIFT.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XII. A BROKEN BUTTERFLY.

"All over!" repeated Jenny. The words almost took away her breath. She hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry, in the mingled shock, surprise, and relief

of such news. And yet that ineffable look in Sybil's eyes—a mother would have understood it better, aye, even the most disapproving of mothers, and would have taken the poor crushed child to her heart. But sisters—*younger* sisters—cannot quite be mothers in their tenderness, and our poor Jenny was very young. What did she know of the pain her sister was enduring; the pain of abandonment by the man who had seemed like a god to her in his fatal love and beauty, when he first stooped to win her heart? It was well for that aching heart that Jenny's tone expressed nothing worse than absolute bewilderment.

"Oh!" she said with a kind of gasp, "I am so—" Then, checking herself as she saw her sister's wasted hands go up to cover her face, and recalled the meaning of the words she had heard: "But, Sybil, I don't understand. He does not love—Oh, you mean he is angry because you have broken it off. Yet one might have known you would. And he—surely he must honour you more for refusing, if he is anyway worthy of you. What has he said?"

But already Sybil was regretting having told as much as she had. The words had broken from her, wrung forth by the irresistible craving for sympathy which her sister's generosity and affection had evoked; but the way in which Jenny took her answer, her readiness to condemn Gareth, even before she knew where he was in fault, recalled his victim to herself.

Anything but blame for him she could bear; but not that. Her love for him was so blindly worshipping that, even though he had smitten her through the very heart, she would not blame him herself. Nay, so long as the wrong he had done her was hidden in that heart, she could draw the edges of the wound it had made over it, hold it lovingly there, forgive it; and by the divine power of that forgiveness let her love grow still greater and put forth deeper roots than before. But would Jenny forgive him if she knew, she who was ready to cry shame on him even when she did not know that he had erred at all? Or rather, might she not raise that cry so loud as to bring down general reproach on that cruel but dearly loved one; reproach which might in time reach his ears, and, by proving that she had betrayed him, make him love her still less?

"Hush, hush!" she said, dropping her poor hands from her face, and lifting them tremblingly to Jenny. "He is worthy,

more than worthy of me. It is not his fault. You don't understand ; only—it is all over."

She said these words again as if to stop any further questioning ; but not even her magnanimity could suppress the infinite sadness of the tone which uttered them ; and Jenny's eyes filled with pity at the sound of it. At that moment she felt almost willing to accept Gareth Vane for a brother, in view of the sacrifice her sister had made in renouncing him. And she was remorseful too ; she believed that she had not done that sister justice. Of late, indeed, she had begun to read Sybil's character more truly, to judge her by other rules than those by which she would judge herself, and while loving her as much as, or more than ever, to expect less from her ; but now she began to think this judgment had not been correct. Even she could not have contemplated any higher duty than to voluntarily give up the man she loved, when she was free to marry him, because that freedom had been purchased by her mother's death ; and if Sybil had done this, Sybil so soft, so tender, to whom love was an essential, ought she not to be rewarded ? Could she be allowed to break her heart in silence as she was doing ? Would their mother have suffered it ?

"Sybil dear," she said vehemently, "this must not be. You have done it for poor mamma's sake ; and it is very good of you, very good and noble ; but I do not believe she would wish it. She wanted your happiness before anything else ; and if it pains you so—if you love him still, why should you not marry him ? It cannot be necessary that you should both be parted and made unhappy for life."

"I did not deserve to be happy," said Sybil. Jenny was torturing her in pure ignorance ; and yet the poor sufferer, weak in so many ways, struggled still for strength to bear the torture and show no petulance against the sister who, she well knew, would have laid down her life for her.

Yet it was very hard. She must shield Gareth ; yet to do so by assuming a heroism of which she felt herself incapable was repugnant to her ; and poor Sybil was not clever at subterfuge.

"I can't tell you about it," she said, bursting into tears. "It is not as you think, though that would be quite sufficient reason ; but there is another as well—a reason he knows. He—he does not wish it himself now. Oh, Jenny, don't go on asking me questions. Don't say any more

about it. Only believe that he is not to blame, not in any way, and that I cannot help loving him though I shall never see him any more—never any more."

The last words were hardly audible. Her cough had come on with the tears ; and despite her sister's efforts at soothing her it went on and on, growing more violent till at last her lips were suddenly reddened by a stain which sent Jenny flying in wild terror, first for Mrs. Matherson and then for a doctor. The hemorrhage was over long before the latter came, however, and had been so slight altogether that he thought very little of it. After a severe attack of inflammation the lungs were naturally weak, and any violent agitation or fit of weeping might easily cause a rupture of some minute vessel. She was undoubtedly in a very low state ; but there did not seem to be much organically amiss. Let her have plenty of nourishing food and no worry or excitement of any sort. Nothing so bad as crying for a girl in that feeble condition ; and Jenny, feeling terribly guilty and reproaching herself already with having been the cause of the accident, promised eagerly to obey, and determined that she, at any rate, would not be the first to mention Gareth Vane's name again. How could she help being glad that the brief engagement was over ? And Sybil had assured her again and again of the fact, and had begged her to ask no more questions. Surely it was well that she should obey, and that the man, who had come like an ill wind into their lives, should be suffered to pass away in silence. Blame him of course she would, for his coming if not for his going—nay, despite Sybil's faltering excuses, more perhaps for the latter than the former ; only the blame should be in her own heart. She would mention his name no more ; and perhaps—in time—

What did Sybil mean by "another reason" ? Was it not possible that, through the valley of the shadow of death, she had come to recognise true gold and despise alloy ? That her heart, after its short fitful wandering, had gone back to its old owner ? Ah ! indeed she would be silent if such happiness were in store for them, silent and thankful too ! Her great eyes shone out with nearly their old gladness at the mere thought of it.

And meanwhile Sybil, tucked up in the bed where Mrs. Matherson (who thought more of the accident than the doctor did) had insisted on banishing her for the rest of the day, was reproaching herself for the

alarm she had occasioned ; and trembling lest her tears and bungling should have roused her sister's suspicions of the truth. Jenny was so impetuous. Who knew what she might say or do if her indignation were once roused ? She watched nervously till the younger girl came into her room again, and then put up a pitiful little mouth to be kissed, whispering eagerly :

" Dear Jenny, I'm so sorry I made such a fuss. Promise me one thing now; please do."

" Anything in the world if you'll only not excite yourself," said Jenny, kissing her. " Sybil, the doctor said you were to be quiet."

" I will; only promise me first that you will not speak about this any more, even to me. Indeed, there has been no wrong done. It is all for the best, and even mamma must forgive. I am — quite happy."

Happy, with that face ! Aye, and with that folded paper in her bosom on which her hand rested even then ! But the poor little martyr had forced a smile to bear out the faltering words ; and Jenny, with the gladness still in her own eyes, saw the smile only, and not what was behind it.

" Of course I will promise," she said readily. " We will never speak of him or it again ; and as to mamma, be comforted, darling, for she forgave you long ago. So now rest quietly while I make you some iced lemonade. The doctor said it would do you good."

She went away as she spoke, and Sybil was left at peace. She had succeeded. Jenny was evidently satisfied, and Gareth safe from any imputation of baseness or wrong-doing. Now she could breathe freely ; but the long-drawn, quivering breath sounded far nearer to a sob, and, as she drew that paper from its hiding-place, and unfolded it for the hundredth time, her eyes were so dazzled with tears she could hardly see the words which—Heaven pity her!—she knew too well by heart already.

This was the note Gareth had written her, in the bitterness of his wrath and mortification at believing she had played fast and loose with him :

" MY DEAR MISS DYSART,—Thanks for your lesson on keeping faith with a woman. It might have been more courteously given, but I make no complaint. Those who live in glass houses can't play at stone-throwing, and probably you knew that I had already heard the news, and thought further words

would be wasted on me. On the whole, I agree with you. A young woman who had jilted one man so easily before might have been expected to jilt another ; and under the circumstances a meeting would have been out of place, and the writing to say so invidious. Again thanks for certain very charming hours which have helped to pass an idle summer month more than pleasantly, and adieu. Pray do not trouble to answer this, or to return me my other notes. Mamma and the curate (happy man !) wouldn't approve of any more correspondence, I'm sure, and, if you go on as you have begun, you will have quite a pretty little collection of such billets-doux before long. Besides, I am just leaving England for a pleasure tour of some length, so any packet sent to me would probably arrive too late. With best wishes and congratulations on your future, believe me, very truly yours,

GARETH VANE."

Yes, that was all. That was what she had been carrying about in her bosom ever since ; the knife which had dealt her her death-wound, and yet which, for love of the hand which had wielded it, she could not fling from her. Not the faintest idea had she as to its meaning, save only that, for some reason, his love for her was dead ; that he had left her and gone away, scorning her for the very error into which he had betrayed her.

Why was it ?

" A woman who has jilted one man so easily might be expected to jilt another."

Was that true ? Ah, perhaps some might say so—the Ashleighs, in their anger, or the unkind world outside—but surely not he, he who, a few weeks back, had striven so earnestly, and with such sweet persuasive words, to show her that, as she had never given her love to Lionel, so there was no wrong or robbery in giving it to another. Nay, that to keep faithful to the former would be to perpetuate a lie, and act dishonestly instead of as a true woman. What could he mean now by changing so ?

The poor child could not understand it at all. Any idea as to the wrong dating of that letter was not, of course, likely to occur to her ; and the weakening effect of her illness, combined with that crushing blow of her mother's loss, prevented her from being able to originate any explanation to herself.

But for her mother's death, indeed, she would have disregarded his prohibition, and written to her lover by the very next

post, to ask him what had caused this change in him, making him cast doubt and scorn on the love he had prayed for so passionately only a fortnight back; and why he had put her in so cruel a position by never keeping the appointment which he himself had made. Sybil had plenty of pride of her own on most occasions, as even Lion had proved. Had he written to her such a letter, so scornful, so insulting, she could never have answered it at all; certainly not by such tender, humble pleadings as rose to her lips again and again whenever she thought of Gareth Vane. But her love for the latter was, as I have said, unlike anything else in her life. It resembled only some fragrant, deep-hued tropical flower, which, springing up, Heaven knows how, in some English cottage garden, fades out all the pale-coloured formal blossoms round it by the glow and fire of its beauty; and but for that terrible judgment on her, but for the dead face lying white and mute upon its pillow in the room across the corridor, she would have answered Gareth's letter at once and he would have got her answer, and the misunderstanding between them would have been cleared up.

To Sybil, however, feeble with sickness, and half-stunned by the shock of her lover's desertion coming on that of Mrs. Dysart's sudden death, the very inexplicability of Gareth's conduct seemed to show that it was not he but God who was punishing her. He had not deserted her. It was God who had come between them, and she dreaded to stretch a hand to him lest a second judgment should fall on her in consequence of the sacrilegious act. She had preferred her lover to the parent who had cherished and idolised her from the hour of her birth; and now that parent lay dead in the next room, and God in His justice had taken her lover from her in his turn. How could she be heartless or impious enough to call him back, nay, even to receive him, if he came of his own accord?

For at first she could not believe that he had really left her. There had been some mistake, some delusion; but it could not last. Something would clear it up; and then, next day, he would be back at her feet, with a love more passionately fond than ever for the sorrow of having wronged her. Why, the very day after writing that cruel letter he must have seen her mother's death in the papers, and felt his heart touched to forgiveness and sympathy by the thought of what she must

be suffering, and of how he had added to her pain. That announcement alone would tell him why she had not answered him; and by-and-by, when the funeral was over and he thought she could bear to listen to him, he would write again or come to beg her forgiveness. Ah, dear! was it very wicked to long so sorely to give it, to feel that, even if they might not marry, one tender word, one farewell kiss from him were worth all other comfort in the world to her?

It might be wicked, but I suppose it was human. At any rate, try as she might, she could not help longing for it—could not help watching for every post which came to Chadleigh End, starting at every knock at the door, and sinking back more faint, more sad, and more heart-sick after each disappointment. And it was because of this weakness in herself, and because of the shame she felt for it, that she dared not look at her mother's face; nay, not even at the room whence she had been carried away, and where she had so often sat at her feet, or helped her to dress and undress, in the happy days before this sad hour when she had to bid both a last farewell.

It was a fortnight then since Mrs. Dysart's death; but Gareth had neither written again, nor come, nor had he done so since, though July had passed into August, and by this time they were in the last days of the last month of summer. She had heard of him indeed in the interim, but only once, and through the chatter of a couple of servant-girls, in an adjoining room, the day before she left Hillbrow. Someone in the village had asked Emily, their housemaid, if it was true that Miss Dysart had quarrelled with her new lover, as he was off to Norway, with a rich widow lady and a lot of fine friends, for a yachting trip. Emily was repeating this and saying she didn't believe it, but the other servant declared she had heard it too from a labourer on Dyson's farm. Mr. Vane had written to the farmer himself to tell him to send down to Southampton a fishing-rod which he had left behind, and the two maidens waxed so hot on the subject, that, even if Sybil's door had not happened to be slightly open, she must have heard their exclamations on her lover's heartlessness. "A fine thing, indeed, to be going off pleasuring and his sweetheart in such trouble! Not even to come down for the funeral! He couldn't care much for poor Miss Sybil at that rate. Mr. Ashleigh now—ah! he was different—"

It was terrible to Sybil to lie there listening to this, more terrible even in the knowledge it afforded her that she was being talked over, pitied, and wondered about, than that her lover's threat had not been an idle one : that he had in truth left her. If God did not mean to suffer this marriage, if He looked on her as the cause of her mother's death, then perhaps it would be better that Gareth should take the initiative in their separation. It would spare him pain, at any rate, aye, and her also, the pain of refusing him anything—that is, if she could refuse him—and so long as she knew that he was happy, and could fancy that in his heart he loved her, still her love for him was great enough to have borne its own sorrow in resignation and survived it. But to know that others, her social inferiors, were gossiping over her grief and putting their own vulgar constructions on it; that she, the very pink of propriety and refinement, the object of so much envy and admiration in former days, was being pitied by servant-maids, and discussed by village idlers and farm-labourers was terrible to her—a pain which had no counterbalancing good for another to enable her to support it, but which, by its very pettiness, was a perpetual humiliation to her. Nor was this the worst form of humiliation that poor Sybil had to endure. It was all very well for Jenny to try to hide from her the cruel slander of which Mrs. Ashleigh had told her, and to which Gareth's disappearance and her sister's illness and seclusion lent a horrible colouring of truth. Jenny, indeed, while crying hot tears over it in private, prayed that no whisper of it might reach Sybil's ears to insult them ; but slander will penetrate through the thickest walls, and, without knowing of what she was accused, poor Sybil felt that she was under a slur, that people were holding aloof from them on her account, and that her fair name had suffered in consequence of that terrible night, the very thought of which made her shudder with shame and misery.

Did she not know that she had had to give Jenny money to fee that vile old man, more for keeping his tongue quiet than for any service he had rendered her ; and that Jenny had come back from the interview with burning cheeks and a manner painfully avoidant of all allusion to what had taken place in it ? The Ashleighs, too, Sybil knew them well enough to feel sure that, however vexed they might be at her treatment of Lionel, that alone would not

have sufficed to make them withdraw themselves entirely from two orphan girls, who had almost grown up among their own children, just when they most needed their kindness and assistance ; and more especially when Lion himself was giving both with a cordial generosity, which showed sufficiently that he at any rate bore no malice for the injury done him. She knew, too, that both the ladies had called once since Mrs. Dysart's death—the baronet's wife while she was too ill to see anyone, and Mrs. Ashleigh later ; but Jenny had come up to her with eyes so swollen with weeping from the second visit, and had striven so pointedly to avoid answering any questions about it, that Sybil, who had grown pitifully timid of late, felt that something unpleasant was behind, and dropped her enquiries as falteringly as she had put them.

That people were talking disrespectfully of her she felt sure. Servants had looked strangely, and dropped half-spoken words. People who had run after them with admiring persistency, now either took no notice of them at all, or contented themselves with a formal card of enquiry. Jenny had once asked her, blushing violently, how long exactly it was before Jowl had come to her rescue that night ; and had added, with an anxious frown on her young brow, that she thought, perhaps, they had made a mistake in asking him not to say anything about the matter. It had been an unfortunate accident ; but there was no harm in it, therefore there could be no real harm in its being known ; and since their removal, Sybil herself had received a note from the old man, filthy beyond conception, smelling strongly of tobacco, and to this effect :

"DEERE MISS,—This kums ter say as i ham not akountable fur any storys as is agoin about has ter that theer unfortnit advencher o yours. The folks has spredds em lies threw want o knollige, as is lucky i can pruve an will be appy so to dew if so bes as you keer to make it wurth the wile of Your Humble Wellwisher,

"ISAC JOWL."

Poor Sybil ! Is it necessary to describe her feelings at reading such a letter addressed to her ? She crumpled it up shudderingly, and thrust it into the flame of the candle almost before her eyes had mastered its contents ; but though she had not answered or done anything about it, she could not get it out of her mind. What could such a man say for her, that

would not be worse than the worst that was said against her by anyone else? But, oh! how terrible that there should be anything said at all, and of her who had done nothing, and who shrank from nothing so keenly as the slightest infringement on her maidenly dignity and fair fame! It had to do with Gareth, of course, probably with his sudden disappearance at the very hour when her mother's death left him free to woo and wed her. Perhaps they were saying that he had quarrelled with her, or that she had jilted him too; but how could she explain matters, and clear herself, without blackening him? There was the difficulty. If he had only written a little gently, a little courteously, if he had given some reason for not keeping that unlucky appointment, it would have been different; but to put her own conduct in its true light she must take Jenny into her confidence, and show her that insolent heartless letter; and what would Jenny think of him if she did so? What would anyone think? Ah, no, no; better bear any guesses at blame in silence rather than by casting it on her lover hold him up to opprobrium. He might have ceased to love her altogether, he might never come back, but if he did, he should find that, even if all this killed her, the heart he had broken had been large enough to hide his offences in its shelter, and seek no sympathy or compassion from the judgment of an unprejudiced world.

It was characteristic of Sybil in all this, that she never stopped to ask herself whether the man who had been capable of dealing so heartlessly with her were worthy of the tender consideration she lavished on him; characteristic of her that she should care so much for what people thought of him, and so little for what he was in himself; that with such real and terrible woes

to crush her, she should have room for fretting over the coldness of acquaintances or the gossip of strangers. To Jenny such a thing would not have been possible. Nay, she was not even capable of comprehending it in her sister; but poor Sybil was not like Jenny. To her nature, soft, somewhat shallow, caring greatly for praise and approbation, anything like coldness or censure came like a blight, affecting her far more at times than the cause that gave rise to it. Jenny had once questioned with George Eliot whether it were better to "be worthy the writing or to write, worthy the reading and the world's delight," but to Sybil there would have been something better still, namely, the "world's delight" itself. To be that, no matter how, would have been life and light to her just as to be shunned and put on one side, as she was now, was darkness and death; and ill, almost dying as she actually was under the combined shock of her mother's death and her lover's desertion, not even the terrible circumstances of the former could save her from the additional pang, however miserably small in comparison, of feeling that "other people" were laying that death at her door.

Terribly small and unheroic all this seems; a weakness of character utterly unlike a heroine of romance; or for that matter any heroine at all; and yet there was heroism in this poor little maid who had borne herself so sweetly and graciously in the sunshine, and who now, wounded at every point, heart-broken, and sinking from shame, sorrow, and unkindness, could still kiss the hand which stabbed her, and without one resentful murmur could deny herself the only comfort left her, of sympathy and consolation, for the sake of the very one who had deprived her of everything else.

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THE FOLLOWING IMPORTANT ADVANTAGES ARE CLAIMED FOR IT, viz., that—

It is free from nauseous taste and smell; It does not produce offensive eructations or sickness; It is consequently digested without inconvenience, and can be taken by many who cannot bear ordinary Cod-liver Oil, even of the finest quality; It presents all the medicinal and nutritive qualities of the remedy in their highest degree of excellence.

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They are now, however, able to go a step farther, and to produce their Oil so free from disagreeable flavour that it is almost as palatable as Salad Oil.

A. & H. offer it to the medical profession and to the public under the conviction that it will prove a boon to all who have occasion to take Cod-liver Oil, and render it available to very many who hitherto have been unable to bear it.

THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, Dec. 13th, 1879.

Instead of taking an ordinary Cod-liver Oil, and attempting to disguise its flavour by all sorts of devices and mixtures, they (ALLEN & HANBURY'S) have studied anew the processes of manufacture of Cod-liver Oil, for which they have always had a great reputation; and, as a result of this study, they have produced a Cod-liver Oil which is so delicate in flavour as to be free from all the usual nauseous properties of fish-oil, and has almost the delicacy of salad oil. We congratulate Messrs. ALLEN & HANBURY'S on having realised a pharmaceutical progress on the best lines of advance.

THE LANCET, Oct. 18th, 1879.

Messrs. ALLEN & HANBURY'S have as nearly as possible succeeded in depriving Cod-liver Oil of its nauseating smell and taste. They present in their "Perfected" article the oil in a beautifully bright and but very little coloured state. Many persons to whom the taste of the oil has hitherto been an obstacle will doubtless be able to take it.

THE LONDON MEDICAL RECORD, Dec. 15th, 1879.

It is a pleasure to meet with so excellent a preparation as this "Perfected" Cod-liver Oil. Limpid, delicate, free from disagreeable flavour, and admirably refined by a new and improved process, the "Perfected" Cod-liver Oil of ALLEN & HANBURY'S will henceforth take its place as a pharmaceutical product which is in its way unrivalled.

THE MEDICAL PRESS AND CIRCULAR, Oct. 22nd, 1879.

Having personally tested it, and having, moreover, given it to delicate patients, we think the most fastidious will not object to take it on the score of taste, and no nauseous eructations follow after it is swallowed.

THE PRACTITIONER, January, 1880.

It is a great boon to get such an oil as the present. We have tried it, and find that it is exceedingly bland to the taste, and causes no eructations or nausea afterwards. It well deserves the name of "Perfected."

(See also THE MEDICAL TIMES AND GAZETTE, Oct. 4th, 1879.)

Dr. DOBELL writes :—"I must not miss this opportunity of commending the 'Perfected' Cod-liver Oil lately introduced by MESSRS. ALLEN & HANBURYS. It is so pure and tasteless that, when oil will agree at all, this is sure to do so."—"On Loss of Weight, Blood Spitting, and Lung Disease (New Edition), by HORACE DOBELL, M.D., Consulting (late Senior) Physician to the Royal Hospital for Diseases of the Chest, &c., &c.

This is the ONLY Oil which does not "repeat." All who take Cod-liver Oil will appreciate this. Insist on having ALLEN & HANBURYS' "Perfected" Oil, and do not be persuaded to accept cheap substitutes which are persistently offered.

DOSE.—For an adult, a dessert-spoonful, gradually increased to one or two table-spoonfuls, and repeated two or three times a day for several weeks, or even months. For Children, one tea-spoonful, gradually increased to two or three. The Oil may be taken floating on milk, or on orange wine, or on cold lemon tea, made by pouring a pint of boiling water on half a lemon cut into thin slices, the acid and aroma of which will be found grateful both to the palate and stomach.

Sold only in Imperial Quarter Pints, 1/4; Half-pints, 2/6; Pints, 4/9; and Quarts, 9/-; capsuled and bearing Allen & Hanburys' Signature and Trade Mark. Of all Chemists.

N.B.—The stronger smell and taste of brown varieties of Oil seem frequently to be regarded as evidence of greater medicinal value; the following extracts from some eminent authorities show that these qualities are simply injurious:—

Extract from "Elements of Materia Medica," abridged Edition, 1865, by Dr. PEREIRA, F.R.S.

"The Oil, as contained in the cells of the fresh liver, is nearly colourless. It is obvious, therefore, that of the varieties of oil to which reference has been made, the most colourless, prepared entirely from fresh livers, must possess the constituents of the Oil in their purest state. The darker varieties, which are obtained either at a high temperature, or from livers in which putrefaction has made more or less progress, contain a large proportion of volatile acids and biliary matter; while the lighter sort is precisely the poorest in these bodies, but is richest in oleic acid and glycerine. Chemical analysis lends no support to the opinion at one time entertained that the brown Oil is superior as a therapeutic agent to the pale Oil. Chemistry has not discovered any substances in the darker Oil which would confer on it superior activity as a medicine. Experience fully confirms the inference drawn from observation of the chemical constitution of these varieties of Cod-liver Oil as to their relative therapeutic value."

"Dr. WILLIAMS, in his 'Principles of Medicine,' affirms the superiority of the pure fresh Oil. Dr. GARROD likewise sums up his argument in favour of the pale Oil thus:—"1. It is the real Oil, as contained in the liver of the cod fish. 2. It contains no products of putrefaction such as are found in the dark oils. 3. It sits more easily on delicate stomachs. 4. Experience has proved it to be a most effective therapeutic agent."

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The value of EXTRACT OF MALT as a nutritive and restorative agent for delicate and exhausted constitutions is now fully acknowledged by the medical profession, the Extract being rich both in muscle and fat-forming elements. It promotes, moreover, in a special and peculiar manner, the solution and digestion of all farinaceous foods, and is, therefore, a valuable remedy in those diseases which arise from an imperfect assimilation of these substances. The presence of the active and valuable constituents of the Malt, unimpaired and in a concentrated form, is secured in ALLEN & HANBURYS' EXTRACT, by a special process of their own and evaporation *in vacuo*.

Dose.—From a dessert-spoonful to a table-spoonful with or immediately after meals. EXTRACT OF MALT forms an excellent adjunct to COD-LIVER OIL.

In bottles, at 2/- and 3/6 each. Trade Mark—a Plough. Of all Chemists.

THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, May 1st, 1880. Messrs. Allen & Hanburys deserve the thanks of the profession for having produced an extract containing all the nutritious and active essences of malt, while rejecting the alcoholic compounds. The extract is obtained by a process of evaporation *in vacuo*, and owes its special properties to the large quantity of unaltered diastase which it contains.

THE MEDICAL TIMES AND GAZETTE, Nov. 22nd, 1879.—We have no hesitation in strongly recommending to the notice of the profession the "Pure Extract of Malt" now brought out by Messrs. Allen & Hanburys, of Plough Court. It is of a delicate brown colour, of about the consistency of good light-coloured treacle, has absolutely no burnt smell, is of a very agreeable flavour, and is entirely free from alcohol and carbonic acid.

(See also THE LONDON MEDICAL RECORD, November 15th, 1879.)

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are combinations of ALLEN & HANBURYS' EXTRACT OF MALT with Cocoa Extract and Paste Chocolate, affording delicious beverages. The EXTRACT may be most agreeably taken in these forms. Sold in tins, at 1/- and 2/- each. Of all Chemists, Grocers and Italian Warehousemen.

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THE BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL, 16th October, 1880.

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THE LANCET, 24th July, 1880.

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H. ERNEST TRESTRAIL, F.R.C.S., M.R.C.P.

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THE CRECHE, STEPNEY CAUSEWAY, E., 13th Nov., 1880.

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"A woman suffered from neuralgia in the left great occipital nerve. Four half-drachm doses cured her."

"A man, aged twenty-five, had suffered for a fortnight from severe bilateral neuralgia in the temples, in the eyes, and under the eyes. Half a drachm dose thrice daily cured him in three days."

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"This remedy, whilst apparently highly useful in neuralgia, produces no toxic symptoms."—From a Paper by **SYDNEY RINGER, M.D.**, and **WILLIAM MURRELL, M.D., M.R.C.P.**, in *The Lancet*, March 6th, 1880.

"The results obtained from Tonga by Drs. Ringer and Murrell fully coincide with mine. I have notes of cases of brain and kidney disease in which Tonga alone succeeded in removing pain. All cases of neuralgia (supra- and infra-orbital branches of the fifth nerve), with swelling of the temporal veins during the attack, were benefited."—From a Paper by **C. BADER, Esq.**, Ophthalmic Surgeon to Guy's Hospital, in *The Lancet*, Mar. 20, 1880.

"W. H.—, aged thirty-one, had been suffering from most severe neuralgia for nearly ten days. The teeth, both in the upper and lower jaw, were in a very decayed condition. One teaspoonful of Tonga was ordered to be taken every six hours, till the pain was relieved. The paroxysms entirely ceased after the fourth dose."

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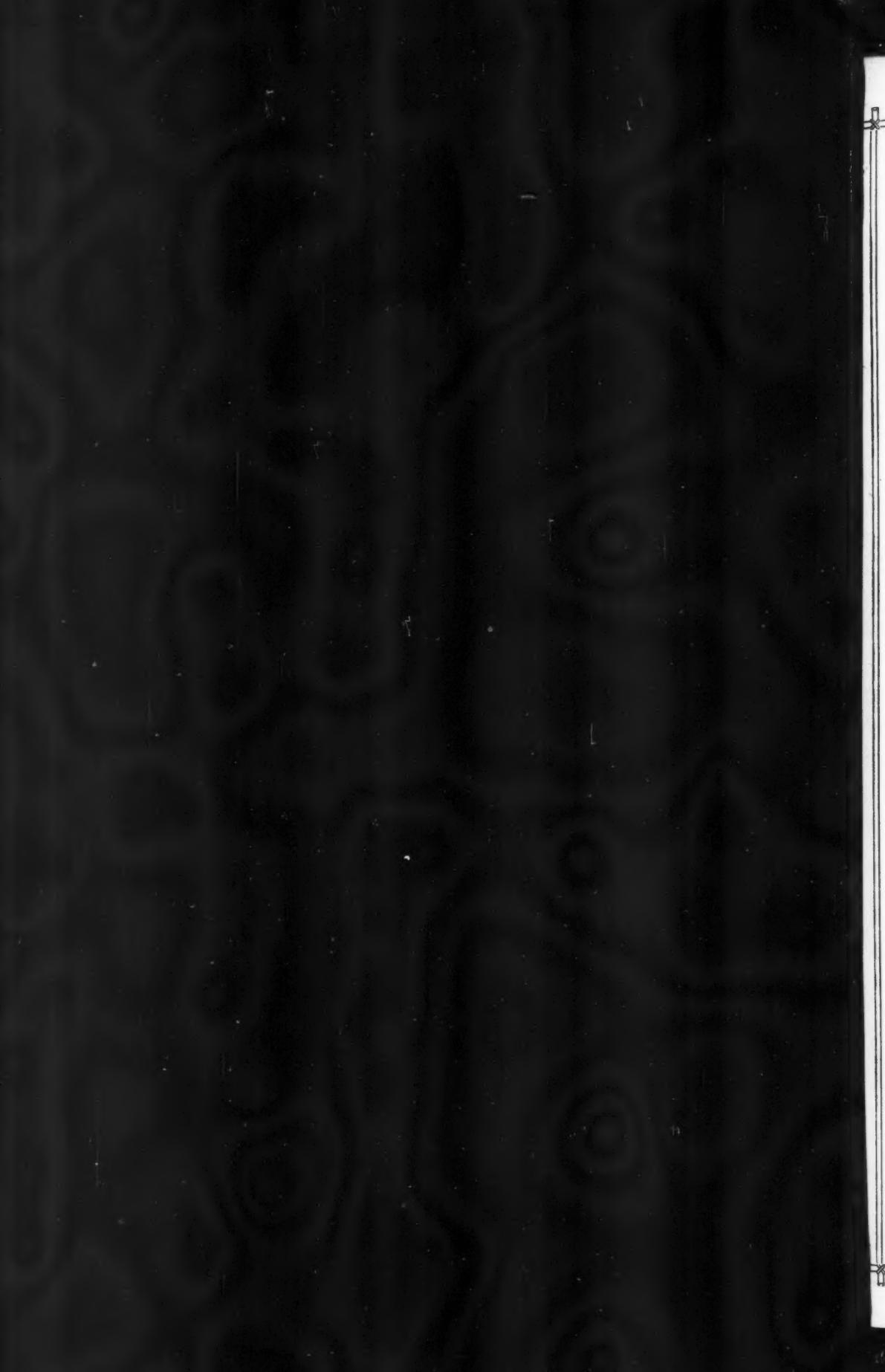
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“OVER THE SEA WITH THE SAILOR.”

CHAPTER I. IN THE PORT OF BOSCASTLE.

On a certain evening in early summer a couple of young men were lying on the brow of a cliff between Boscastle and Tintagel on the Cornish coast. Before them was the broad Atlantic, with no land between them and the coast of Labrador except a little bit of Newfoundland—no mankind all the way, an exhilarating thought; below them on one side was the little harbour and old-world town of Boscastle, and on the other, two or three miles to the south, Trevenna and King Arthur’s Stronghold. Everybody knows that there are two ways of lying on a sea-board cliff. You may lie as if you were where you most wished to be, in perfect repose, lazily looking out at the blue stretch of water, idly following the course of a sea-gull, and marking on the horizon a sail or the smoke of a steamer, while the sun gently warms you all over till you feel “done through,” like a conscientious steak on a gridiron, while sweet breezes play on your cheek, and you feel as if you would hardly exchange these zephyrs for the breath of your mistress, and as if you intended to remain until that great king and despot, who, as Rabelais teaches, commands

everything, causes the invention of everything, is lord of all, and must be obeyed, namely, Hunger, orders you to get up and walk in the direction of provant. The other is the restless and uneasy manner, as if your heart was not in idleness and your mind not in harmony with the seeming repose of legs and spinal column. Both methods were apparent in the attitude and appearance of the two companions. They illustrated in their friendship a very old maxim of philosophy. It is not in Solomon’s Proverbs nor is it in Plato, but I am sure it is old, because it is too profound for myself, or any other modern philosopher, to have invented. “It is best,” said the anonymous sage—very likely he was a Chinaman—“in choosing a friend to choose one who will wear. Therefore he must not follow the same calling as yourself. In true friendship there must be no professional jealousy, no rivalry.” Now one of these young men—he who sat and rested with such perfect joy—was a Poet; and the other—the restless person—was a Painter. The Poet, by an unlucky stroke of fate, did not look poetical; he was short in stature, wore a beard and spectacles, and his legs were not so straight as those of more favoured brethren—in fact, they formed that interesting conic section, an elongated ellipse. This curve, applied to human legs,

is said to be bad for stopping pigs. As for his name, as it has got nothing to do with the story, and as it was an ugly name, and as the poet always committed the sin of cursing his ancestors for having such a name whenever he thought about it, and as his friends always called him Poet, Maker, Bard, or Inspired One, there is no need to mention it at all. He wrote his immortal verses under an assumed name, and used to grind his teeth when admiring maidens (of ravishing beauty) wrote him rapturous letters, and he was fain to remember straight hair, curly legs, and unromantic name.

The artist, on the other hand, who could not write verses, had curly brown hair, the brightest eyes possible, a manly complexion composed of brown, red, and white, laid on in artful gradations by nature, and features as straight and handsome as those which made the pride of Paris's mother. For young maidens to look upon those features was a sovereign specific for headache, ennui, languor, despondency, listlessness, vapours, and lowness of spirits, for they straightway began to sit upright, grow cheerful, take a bright view of life, pity the sad condition of nuns, and think how thankful they themselves ought to be to Heaven for making them so beautiful. For comeliness in man, they thought, not knowing that even ugly men have their feelings, is attracted magnetically towards beauty in woman.

His name was much better than the Poet's, being Davenant, and his christian-name was something of the romantic and reverent kind greatly favoured by tender mothers in the days when Miss Sewell's novels prepared the way for a generation of Cyrils, Guys, and Cyprians, few of whom have proved themselves fathers of the Church, though many have become her prodigal sons. But, by reason of a certain quality in the youth which one cannot explain, he was always called by his friends Jack. This being so, it is useless to give his real name in full. The curious may refer to his baptismal register.

He it was, as I have said, who looked restless. Something was on his mind, else he would have felt the repose of the hour and enjoyed the splendour of the setting sun.

The Poet spoke slowly and critically :

"I agree with you, Jack. She is pretty—she is very pretty, indeed. I like the dark blue eye best, I think, of all eyes

that be. Wordsworth might have written a sonnet on the Dark Blue Eye." He took out his pocket-book and made a note. "I am sure that Wordsworth would have written a sonnet, had he thought of it, on the Dark Blue Eye—dark and true and tender—beautiful collocation!—pity I am too late with it. Her features are straight. In this day of snub noses and little round faces it is refreshing to come across the classical type. Her figure——"

"I declare," Jack cried, "that you poets are the least imaginative of mortals. To be sure it must be destructive to the imagination to be for ever thinking what ought to be said about a thing. You 'agree with me!' Hang it, man, you talk as if you were discussing the merits of a poem. I say that her beauty is a beauty that takes possession of a man—unless he be a poet—and fills his brain, and makes him go mad with longing and delight."

"Take care, Jack."

"What am I to take care of? Think of her hair, man of sluggish blood! how it ripples like silk threads in the sunshine; Dorothea by the brook had not such long and lovely locks; and then think of her figure, the tall graciousness of her presence. Helen of Troy was not more queenly than this village girl. Think of her voice, so musical and clear; it is the voice of Juliet. With such tones that maiden ravished the heart of Romeo. Think of her smile, when one is happy enough to make her smile; did ever man dream of a woman's smile more sweet? Venus must never laugh, but she should smile often. Think of her eyes when she looks at you, Poet! They are the eyes of the Goddess of Love herself, the Queen of Heaven and of Earth."

"Take care, Jack," repeated his friend again.

"Why should I take care?" he asked for the second time.

"Granted that she is about a tenth part as beautiful as you say and think; granted that you fancy yourself in love with her; granted, again, that she is as good as a woman can be——"

"This methodical and cold-blooded person calls himself," said Jack, "a poet!"

"How would it do to transplant her to London? For a cottage by the sea a house and a studio in the Abbey Road; for the companionship of fishermen, that of your

friends ; for a boat in the harbour, a walk in Regent's Park."

"Poor child!" said Jack the lover ; "but we would come to Cornwall as often as we could. I should paint nothing but the cliffs of Boscastle."

"How would she like the ladies who would call upon her? How would the ladies like her? Jack, give it up."

"I shall not give it up. I can never forget her face. Why, I think of her all day long, and when I think of her I tremble."

"Poor old boy! Do you think she is worth it?"

"I am sure she is worth all the worship and respect a man can give her. Every woman is for that matter."

"Humph!" said the Poet. "Go on, Jack."

"It is by the special mercy of heaven," continued the Painter, "that such women are sent into the world; else the standard of things beautiful would be lowered, and so our endeavours slacken, and all mankind sink back into the mud."

"I will take a note of that idea, Jack." The Poet made his note. "If you take no thought yourself how things should be said, permit me to do so. Thank you, I am now listening again."

"No," replied Jack, "I have done. My mind is made up. I shall ask Avis to marry me. If she will not take me—and I don't know"—he added this ruefully, as if unaware of his good looks, pleasant ways, and gallant bearing—"I don't know why she should, being what she is compared with what I am, why then we will go away, and the sooner the better."

"I think, Jack," said the Poet, "that Miss Avis will say Yes. Who would have thought that out of a simple journey to the Cornish coast such dreadful things could follow?"

Jack laughed.

"Was it for this," continued his friend, "that I, who hate walking and love London, and especially the Temple, in June, was persuaded to assume the disguise of a muscular Christian"—he pointed to his knickerbockers—"and to put on a knapsack, whereby my shoulders are bruised into a horrible black and blue, instead of remaining a pearly white? We were to travel all the summer, to make sketches, collect legends, examine pools by the seaside, grow learned over anemones. What have we done? Sat down in a village, and fallen in love with a country girl."

"I can't help it," Jack groaned. Then he said stoutly : "I wouldn't help it, if I could. It would be too great happiness for me to win Avis." His voice sank as he pronounced the sacred name of the girl he loved.

"How shall I go back to the club and tell them that their Jack is lost to them—their Jack of Trumps—because he is engaged to marry a young lady of surpassing beauty, niece to a seafaring party—I think party is the right word—who has certainly been a mariner, who has certainly been a pilot, and is also suspected of having been a pirate?"

"Pirates are scarce," said Jack. "I shall swear he has been a pirate. I will paint his portrait in character."

"True, there is distinction in being a pirate."

"As for those little awkward things," Jack continued, harking back to a previous point, "the convenances of society, the tone of the world, I would as soon that Avis never changed at all: I want no change in her, Heaven knows. The man or woman either—only women are so confoundedly jealous of each other—who can't see with half an eye that here is a gracious and blessed damsel fresh from heaven, to whom the world can add no charm of manner or of style—"

"Spare me, Jack."

"Why, that man or that woman, I say, may go to the devil."

"A very lame and commonplace conclusion to a sentence begun with commendable originality. Well, what am I to do? Shall I up, take off these confounded knickerbockers, and go back to town?"

"No," said Jack; "you are going to stay here and see me through it."

"I will, Jack, I will, if I have to wear knickerbockers for a twelvemonth; only let us send to Exeter or somewhere for some decent 'bacca, and, as I am not in love, and like a glass of respectable claret, let us order some to be brought as quickly as may be. And one thing I am quite certain of: the girl, whether it is the village beauty or anybody else, who marries Jack Davenant, will get as good a husband as she deserves, and I hope she will behave according."

They had been together enjoying the girl's society, yet one had fallen in love with her and the other had not. To be sure the lover was an Artist. Now people whose thoughts are occupied a great deal

with form and colour are naturally susceptible ; and when one of them really meets with a woman whose form is a dream of beautiful curves, and whose colouring drives a painter to despair, so delicate is it, yet so firm, so beautifully shaded, and so full of light, he is at once ready to believe that here must be the long sought for perfect woman. Poets experience greater difficulty in losing their hearts ; it is not, as Jack irreverently said, that they are of slow imagination, but that the ideal woman, the dream of a poet, is so hard to find ; mere grace will not do, nor exquisite colour. They would have her at once lovely as Phryne, sweet as Laura, sympathetic as Cordelia, quick as Rosalind, queenly as Cleopatra, loving as Juliet, and wise as Heloise. Now, Nature makes few such women ; there are more poets than mistresses for them, therefore they fall in love less readily than men of coarser mould. So that when Jack saw in that simple Cornish maiden the one girl in all the world whom he would care to marry, when he raved of her beauty and her grace, when he contrasted her with the girls of society —poor girls of society ! how rough is their treatment in love stories, yet how well they do marry, as a rule !—when he prated (I have omitted most of his prating) of artificial ways and the falsities of London life, the Poet only saw a tall and pretty girl, whose beauty he could have wished to express by magic art in immortal verse ; whom, always in poetry, he would have decked with most of the virtues. He might, too, have fallen in love, not with the sweet girl of flesh and blood, but with the phantom of his own creation, as in the leading case of Pygmalion, or as a certain noble Roman fell in love—bigamously—with the pictures of Atalanta and Helen, and another—but this story I take to be an allegory—who conceived a violent passion for an Effigies of Fortune.

It was in the year 1863. You who can remember seventeen years may pass over the next page or two ; you who cannot, being yet in the bloom and blossom of youth, on which happy circumstance I congratulate you, and wish you every kind of enjoyment while it lasts, must not, on any account, omit to learn something of that older generation which seems to you already far advanced in fogeydom.

There were a great many more places in that year, to begin with, where the traveller

could find quiet nooks, pleasant abiding-places, seaside villages, unknown to the general autumn outpouring, than there are now. He would put up at a simple inn, and sit in the evening, pipe in mouth, among the rustics on a shiny settle ; or he would find a bed over the shop of the universal provider of the place, which smelt of everything all at once, but mostly of tallow, soap, and bacon. When he went home he made his friends envious with reminiscences of the beauty of that place. Gradually the bruit and renown of it spread abroad, people flocked, a hotel was built, and its principal charm was gone.

The man who did most mischief in causing these discoveries and developments was Charles Kingsley, for he not only taught people how to look at beautiful places, what to find at the sea-shore, and how to talk about a sea-board village, but he also inspired them with a craving to search for new places. Also by the might and magic of his pen he peopled the coasts of North Devon and Cornwall with fiction-folk far more real than any creatures of real blood, so that at Clovelly one always thinks of Sebastian Yeo, just as on Exmoor one thinks of Lorna Doone—which proves how good and great and desirable a thing it is to be a novelist, and what a benefactor he is who can so touch the hearts of kindly folk. Again, by his own enthusiasm and its contagion, he stimulated the sluggish brains of men and women who, but for him, would have gone to the end of their days contented with the Parade of Brighton, or even the Jetty of Margate, and sent them abroad, all athirst for rock and valley, cliff and rolling wave. The love of things beautiful is not, if you please, born with us—it must be taught ; the child of nature stands unmoved looking upon the curves of the valley which broadens as it slopes towards the sea, whether the rains slant upon its hanging woods, or the sunshine lies on every leaf ; whether the ocean lies beyond, far and far away, a sheet of burnished gold in the evening sunset, or the sea-fog rolls up the comb with the morning, and clings to every meadow like a bridal veil. Therefore children of nature, as well as innkeepers, lodging-house keepers, and owners of seaside property, ought to be very grateful to Charles Kingsley, Mr. Blackmore, and all who teach them what to see and what to love, and their statues should be erected in every town and village on

the north coast of Devon or wherever they have led the people to wander and admire.

Another thing, which was a curious feature of this seventeen years' old time, was his doing: he gave the people a taste for what, in those unscientific days, was called science. After he had written *Westward Ho* and *Two Years Ago*, tourists of the "higher culture" used to carry hammers, and solemnly knock off bits of rock, never weary of collecting specimens, which they afterwards mixed; or they would, with much gravity, drag home ropes of gruesome sea-weed; or they would peer into the pools left by the sea, as once, they remembered, had peered that great and good and crafty Tom Thurnal, whom you, young friends, have clean forgotten. Yet, Tom was once a person of considerable influence.

They did not learn a great deal of science, I think, for all their chippings, collections, and pool-gazings. Geology and natural history remained very much where they were. As for the young men and maidens, it made them feel like having an improving time when they looked about for anemones, unrolled the sea-weed, found Latin names, and reflected how much superior they were to their grandparents (who had stayed at home and minded the shop and made the money). And there was another thing. When it came to gazing in the pools by the rocks, it not unfrequently happened that the agile shrimp, the crafty water-beetle, the crab with his sidelong glance, the limpet, the cockle, the anemone, and the green slime, were all neglected when, in the untroubled mirror of the surface, eye met eye and gazed each upon either with more intentness and meaning than had been bestowed upon the wonders of the deep. This led to the study of another kind of knowledge, namely, how one person can lay himself out to the best advantage in order to please another person. This is a very delightful and interesting study at a certain time of life, and, indirectly, proves beneficial to trade—notably, in stimulating the industry of the plain gold ring, the mystery of the artificial orange-blossom, and the craft of wedding-cakes—which shows that everybody can set a ball a-rolling, but no one knows where it will stop.

Other visitors, such as the middle-aged, who had already studied this branch of philosophy, but were now fired by the new love of science, went about with bottles and nets, caught a triton, and put him into

an aquarium, where they watched his kicks and his customs, and dreamed ambitiously of writing a monogram upon him which should for ever place them on a pinnacle of fame. Alas! the worship of this nameless "science" is over; the triton lives unregarded in his pool, the sea-anemone attracts but little attention, and middle-aged men have ceased to net grubs and water-lizards in stagnant pools.

As for the amusements of that remote period, young folks played croquet and archery; they danced, but their waltzing was of the kind called *deux temps*, which, for most of the dancers, meant a rush and a scramble; athletics were in their infancy, and unfortunate girls had to wear crinoline. A whole generation, a seven years' generation, of girls wore hideous hoops—the recollection of them brings tears to the eyes and rage to the heart, so ugly, so misshapen, so inartistic, so abominable and horrible was the fashion. I think that it was somewhere about the year 1860 that the Evil One put it into the heads of women that the best way to set themselves off to advantage was to put on hoops. They did so: they put them on: they allowed them to grow greater and greater, until those girls who were pretty—an enthusiastic Frenchman once said that no young woman can possibly be called plain—looked like rose-buds growing out of summer cabbages, and those who were not pretty looked like a continuation or upper blossom of the cabbage. The pity of it!

For the rest, there are a good many things nowadays which were not then even thought of. I am afraid the new inventions, however, are chiefly intended to make life more uncomfortable. They got on without telephones, dynamite, electric bells, electric lights, or torpedoes, though these were just getting invented. The whole of England was looking on the great Civil War of America, and most of our people—though we are rather ashamed of it now, and wish we hadn't—were taking the wrong side, which meant the defence of the Peculiar Institution. We are, indeed, a strange and a wonderful people: a problem for all foreign countries to gaze upon in wonder. Why we sympathised with the South, why we, as a body, were ready to believe the worst of the North, and failed to understand the passionate resolution to keep together their splendid country, and to destroy the traffic in human flesh, is a thing which passeth all understanding.

Therefore I cannot stop here to expound at length my great theory that at times there falls upon the nations of the earth a plague or pestilence of stupidity, wrong-headedness, or madness, whereby evil appears good. No remedy has been found for this disease, and the only medicine yet tried—that of continual talk, stump oratory, and leading articles—has only, as yet, made the mischief worse.

A few weeks before the conversation above recorded, there was gathered together in the bar parlour of the Wellington Arms, in the village of Boscastle, a certain club, consisting of the better sort, who met nightly to talk, smoke a pipe, and discuss the affairs of the parish, the country, and the world. It was the intellectual centre of Boscastle—its only solace, distraction, and amusement. What would life be in an English country town, to the people who never leave it, without the inn where they can sit of an evening and talk?

On this evening there were two strangers present—gentlemen from London, that day arrived, having walked over from Bude carrying their knapsacks. It was early in the season for tourists, but those who visit Cornwall in May are wiser in their times of walking than those who go in August. For the inns are not yet full, and the air is that sweet air of early summer which in this far east of London we so seldom breathe. While the season is young the tourist meets with a warmer welcome; the people are not yet weary of the perpetual coming and going of the curious stranger; they have forgotten the questions asked last season; they are ready to advance a visitor's knowledge as to local matters; they even try to guess at the distances of neighbouring places for him; his presence is a change in the perennial parliament, which after the long winter has become a little dull and wants a fillip. Yet the presence of a stranger brings with it some restraint; the customary jokes are not understood by him, and have to be explained; allusions to personal peculiarities, historiettes of the past, the small change of conversation which passes current, as a rule, and serves to keep the talk from awkward pauses, seems out of place before strangers; and without these counters of conversation the men feel strange.

The club this evening, among whom were Joel Heard the blacksmith, William Hellyer the sexton, Isaac Jago the shipwright, and

others of lesser note, sat mostly silent, every man with his pipe in his hand, while the two strangers, whom we already know, tried to get up the talk.

Jack asked if there were many wrecks upon the coast. It appeared that there were many, but no one volunteered any further information about wrecks. The Poet enquired if there was any smuggling going on. It appeared that there had once been a creditably large trade in smuggling, but that was in the good old war times, when things were taxed, and brandy was worth any price. But, even then, their smuggling was nothing compared to that on the south coast.

An attempt to draw the men on the subject of local traditions and legends broke down completely, as no one knew any legends; no one had ever heard King Arthur's name; nor been told of pixy or fairy; nor whispered to each other ghostly stories round a winter fire—feared no ghosts, in fact; and were altogether as practical a folk as could be expected anywhere. But then, the way to get to the superstitions of a man is not to ask him what they are; that only makes him declare loudly that he has got none, just as a demand for money inclines the mean of spirit to button up their pockets. To extract the jewel of folklore another and a better way must be adopted.

"You gentlemen want stories," said the Sexton. "There's some can tell a story, and some can't; I'm one of them as can't. First you gets the storm; then a ship she comes drivin' down upon the rocks, and gets wrecked into lucifer-matches; then the sailors they gets drowned, and cast ashore; then they gets buried by the sexton and the parson. I don't see much of a story in that. But Stephen Cobbedick, he would spin you a yarn about that, or any other wreck, would keep you gentlemen listening all a winter evening. Pilot, he was, in America, where they are fighting."

"Ay!" murmured another; "Stephen Cobbedick, who has been in foreign parts and sailed the world around and round again, and fought with pirates and sharks, he can tell a tale or two. Stephen hath gifts."

At that moment the door opened, and the great man himself walked in.

The visitors observed that a place had been kept for him, which he immediately occupied with the air of one who steps

into his own seat. It was the most comfortable seat in the room, that in the corner nearest the fire-place, with an arm for one elbow, the fender for a footstool, and the table within reaching distance.

He was a man of about sixty years of age, or perhaps more. He had white hair, curling about his head as thickly as when he was a young man; his eyes were hazel and bright; his nose was broad and rather flat; his expression, which was naturally good-natured and somewhat weak, conveyed the idea that he wished to seem stern and fierce; he was not above the middle height, and he wore a suit of blue as becomes a seafaring man.

The maid of the inn followed him.

He sat down, looked at her with great severity for some moments, and then said :

"I will take, Mary, a glass of rum and water—hot, with a slice of lemon."

The girl instantly set it before him, because, knowing his tastes, she had brought it into the room with her.

"Hope you are well, gentlemen," he began affably. "The wind is freshenin', and if it blows up you'll have a chance of seeing a bit of a sea on to-morrow. You can't say you have seen our coast till you've seen it in a nor'-wester. Lord! I've seen it in every wind that blows; ay, in such a gale that we had to be lashed to the masts."

"Never a gale that would wreck you," said one of the company.

Mr. Cobbedick made no reply to this compliment.

"I know this coast, gentlemen, as well as I know any, except, perhaps, the coast of the Carolinas, where I was pilot. I know this coast, and this coast knows me."

"Queer if it didn't," said the Blacksmith.

"I have been, gentlemen," the Pilot had a little American drawl, due doubtless to his long residence in Carolina, "north, south, east, and west; and there are not many ports on this earth into which I could not find my way. Nor are there many charts which I have not learned, till I knew them as well as I know how to box the compass, and could give the soundings; ay, even among the West Injy Cays. The world is a big place to landlubbers, but we seafarin' men take the measure of it between us."

"A hard life," murmured one of the young men.

"No, sir, not a hard life. Regular work, regular food, regular pay. What more does a man want? There's no women aboard to fall in love with; you can't get married if you keep where you be; whereas, ashore, the difficulty is to keep single. Pitfalls everywhere."

"I have not felt any difficulty yet," said the Poet, "in keeping single."

"Any fool can get married," the Pilot went on, "but it takes a strong man to keep single. For why? The single man grows unmindful of his blessin's; he waxes fat and kicks, like Jeshurun; he goes to sleep on watch, whereby he falls a victim to the first as dares to tackle him."

A murmur of assent.

"I grant you," continued the Pilot, "that there's dangers even in the single life: he drinks too much rum, maybe; he smokes too much baccy; he keeps himself too much to his own craft, whereby his wisdom is lost to his fellow man, and his remarks and maxums are throwed away upon the boy."

"There seems a great deal in what you say," observed one of the strangers.

"We all know," said the Sexton, "that Stephen is a rover, with a rover's eye."

"Gentlemen, a man who remains unmarried, especially a seaman, generally does have somethin' good to say. Do not think that my maxums, which may be next best to Solomon's Proverbs (though he was a married man), growed of their own accord. They come of long reflection and observation, from a puttin' of two and two together, and a separatin' of two and two into one."

"But if you are not married, Stephen," said the Sexton, "you can show the experience of them as is husbands. For you have had your niece in the house for three months and more."

"A niece isn't a wife," said the Pilot. "When I feel to want a cruise, I can up sail and away. Could I h'ist the blue-peter with a wife in the house?"

"I saw her to-day," said the Shipwright; "she grows tall and comely, Stephen."

"She does, Isaac Jago. She grows to favour the Cobbedicks. She's got the Cobbedick chin, which means determination; and the Cobbedick eyes. About those eyes, gentlemen, they do tell the story that my father, who was a bo's'n in the Royal Navy and greatly resembled me, had eyes of such a fierceness, with eye-

brows so like bolsters for shagginess, that when they boarded he was always reckoned as three—one for his cutlash and two for his eyes. When it came to the prize-money, they cheated him out of two shares, and only counted him as one; which shows how the best men in this world have been treated. Else Stephen Cobbedick would this day be sitting among you all a rich man, and gladly would he stand the drinks around. As for her nose, it is the exact picture of mine—the young men stared straight at the feature named, but forebore to laugh; the Pilot's nose, indeed, besides being broader than a nose should be, was rosy red, and possessed more flesh than becomes a maiden's nose—"and her figure is just my own to a T." Here the young men smiled. "As for her voice"—his was a rich and husky organ—"I shouldn't wonder, come to hear her sing, that you'd say she even beat her poor old uncle. The toast," he sang in a hoarse and rusty bass, "For 'twas Saturday night, was the wind that blows, and the ship that goes, and the lass that loves a sailor."

"This is truly wonderful," whispered the Poet.

"And one day you'll have to be marryin' of the young maid, Stephen," said the Sexton. "What will you say then to the chap as marries her? Will you up and tell him and her what a fool he be?"

"I never said," replied the Pilot, "that twasn't good for women to be married, did I? It is their nature, too, as dogs delight to bark and bite. Else they would go off their chumps with chatter and clack."

"Delicately and feelingly put," said Jack.

"A sentiment, sir," said the Poet, "which I have heard before, but never in language more befitting its truth and beauty. Truth is always beautiful, however conveyed; whether it be handed up in a shovel with rags, broken bottles, and dust, or brought on a silver salver."

"You mean well, gentlemen, no doubt," said the Pilot, "but you are a-talkin' just a bit too high for me. When my niece marries I shall find a jolly sailor for her—a honest Cornishman, or even an American, maybe, for the Americans, come to plain swearin', will take the wind out of any Englishman's sails. Or a Devonshire lad, at least. None of your finikin' fine gentlemen for me. There was one down here last week, high connected, bein' a draper's

assistant at Camelford. Well, I sent him to the rightabout before he got ever a chance to speak to the gell."

"No doubt, sir," said the Poet, "you are quite right; and your reasons for preferring an American do you credit. It would be an enviable distinction indeed to boast in one's family the possession of a really hard swearer. I should lead him to the Thames bank, on a Sunday afternoon, just to take the conceit out of the riverside men. I suppose, sir, you would, to a certain extent, consult the young lady's feelings?"

"I should, sir," replied the Pilot with dignity; "my niece's feelin's, as a good young woman's, would go the same way as her uncle's. I pass the word: she feels accordin'. Mary, another glass of rum and water."

With his fourth glass of rum, the worthy Pilot became more personal, and communicated to the young men—the rest of the company having already gone—many valuable and useful facts connected with his own life. He was, it appeared, one of those who put their light in a lamp, and then held it up on high.

"I have been, gentlemen," he said, "upon blue water since I was a boy that high." He held his hand about nine inches from the ground to show the very early age at which he first embarked. "I could handle the ropes, take a rope's endin' without so much as a wink, play the fife while they raised the anchor, make a sea-pie, pour down a glass o' rum, dance a horn-pipe—ay! and even make love to the gells—before most boys left their nurse's laps. That's Stephen Cobbedick, gentlemen."

The Poet said that this information warmed his own heart, because he had himself been also such a boy.

"Since then, gentlemen," said Stephen, swallowing the rest of the glass, "where haven't I been?"

"I suppose," said the Poet, "that Ulysses was nothing to it?"

"I don't know them seas," Stephen replied, catching the last syllable; "but I've been in all other seas as roll—roll them high or roll them low—while the stormy winds do blow, and the landlubbers lyin' down below. I've fought with pirates, sharks, whales, and sea-sarpents; I've been blown about with monsoons, tornadoes, cyclones, and hurricanes; I've been wrecked on most every shore—"

"Have another glass," said Jack.

"Sir," his voice began to thicken a little, "you're a gentleman. Now there's a singular thing about me—nothing never hurt me yet. I'm one o' them as nothing never can hurt. Not fevers, nor choleras, nor even a mangrove-swamp on the New Guinea coast. Not crimps, nor gamblin' saloons, nor drinkin' shops, nor sing-songs, nor dignity balls, where the drink is free and knives is handy. Not alligators, nor rattles, nor cobras, nor hippopotamosses, nor bears, nor panthers. Not arrows, nor stinkpots, nor creases, nor assegais, nor six-shooters, nor spears. It can't be done, gentlemen."

He then proceeded to narrate circumstantially a few diabolical things connected with natives, in which he had been concerned with one Captain Ramsay, an officer whose gallantry, spirit, and freedom from the restraints of the Ten Commandments he esteemed as of the highest value and most proper for universal admiration. He retired about eleven o'clock, having had as much as it was safe even for so seasoned a vessel to carry, and started for home, the night being fine with but little wind, and that from a quarter favourable to one, so heavily laden, bound in his direction.

"Jack," said the Poet, "I should like to see Miss Cobbedick."

"So should I," replied Jack. "Such a young lady, with her uncle's nose, his voice, his eyes—those eyes which were like gimlets, and made a Cobbedick when going a-boarding count for three, one for his eyelash and two for his eyes—his figure, which is a truly beautiful figure for any girl to own—such a girl, my boy, will be a pleasing subject for me to paint and for you to sing."

"Of such stuff as the Pilot," said the Poet reflectively, "are novelists made. He is a Captain Marryat spoiled. Did you observe the broad square brow, and the sharp observant eye? The lips, too, are mobile, which shows imagination."

"No," said Jack, "his is the mobility caused by rum. I think he has been a pirate."

"A novelist wasted. No, not wasted. He amuses his neighbours. Did you remark how his old comrade, Captain Ramsay, has seized upon his imagination? Unless, indeed, Captain Ramsay is a delicate creation of the fancy. And did you further remark how Captain Ramsay is a most desperate rogue, who ought to be hanged from the yard-arm? It is pleasant to look

upon an old man, and reflect that, with better opportunities, he might have become even a poet."

CHAPTER II. STEPHEN COBBLEDICK, PILOT.

I do not know, for reasons I will presently explain, who my parents were, nor where I was born, nor how old I am, nor when I was christened (if indeed that ceremony was ever performed upon me), nor my christian-name, nor my surname. So that I start at a great disadvantage compared with other people. For a long time I thought my christian-name was Avis and my surname Cobbedick. But now I am not at all sure.

When I began to remember anything I answered to the name of Avis, and was the charge of an old granny who was very good to me and never tired of looking after me. When I was old enough to feel the want of a surname I asked her what mine was. She replied that she did not know, but that, as my uncle's name was Cobbedick, she supposed that might be mine also. Therefore I remained Cobbedick. She taught me, while I was with her, a good many useful and solid things: to behave nicely and to repeat the Catechism; to tell the truth and say grace before meat; to sew a hem and read my book; to make a bed or a pudding; fold a blanket, toss up pastry, and sing hymns. I am sure that when you come to think of it, that means a good deal of teaching. Much more she did not teach me because that was all she knew. My uncle it was who committed me to her charge, and his lawyer or the person who had charge of his money paid the bills. My uncle was a pilot in America. When I was (to guess) eleven years of age, and a great girl, I was sent by this man of business to school. It was at Launceston, and because my poor granny presently died I remained at school; the school bills continuing to be paid by my uncle's order, as was supposed, for six or seven years.

It was disagreeable at first to have the deficiencies of my condition thrown in one's teeth by the other girls, but gradually they grew to like me, and then it became a really romantic distinction to be uncertain in those points where all the rest were certain. I suppose a girl with two heads might in the same way come to be envied. And, to be sure, if there is nothing enviable, there is nothing disgraceful in the accident of knowing nothing about yourself. A foundling

is in exactly the same situation. And for myself, I had a most respectable uncle, pilot in America, who, when I came to know him, would, of course, be able to explain all doubtful points to my entire satisfaction.

As a guardian he was not what one could wish, because he never sent me any letters, messages, or tokens of affection of any kind. It was not until I was already past seventeen, as near as could be guessed, that he wrote to me. It was not at all a pleasant letter. It was badly written, and badly spelt; evidently the letter of an illiterate person. He grumbled about the expenses of school, said that he had come home for good, and ordered me to join him at Boscastle.

"My dear," said my schoolmistress, when with a sinking heart I showed her the note, "we must judge people by their actions. Your uncle has evidently never studied the art of expressing ideas in kindly words. But you must remember that for many years he has cheerfully borne the charges of your maintenance and education. Therefore, child, go to him with hopefulness."

This was suitable advice, and I resolved to be of good courage and to hope for the best.

"Now," I said, on the last evening at school, "I am going to find a father and a mother; perhaps, who knows, a sister and a brother; I shall find a birthday, a christening, one godfather and two godmothers, a christian-name, a surname"—because I never believed that a really nice girl could have such a surname as Cobbedick—"and an age. Fancy! I may be twenty, or thirty, or forty. Oh! my dears, suppose I turn out to be forty."

In the school at Launceston we were a quiet collection of girls, mostly daughters of professional men, retired officers, and so forth; they looked forward to a quiet life whose mornings should be spent in household matters, and evenings over needlework, music, and books; somebody would come some day to marry them, then they would lead the lives which their mothers had led before them, wrestling with servants, watchful of children, anxious to make both ends meet. And they envied me the romance of my position.

I came away from the school with hundreds of good wishes, little presents, and prophecies of happiness. Alas! I little knew that I was taking a blindfold leap to that lower level, beneath the "respectable"

stratum, out of which a woman finds it so difficult to climb. To be sure, my schoolfellows were not distinguished for birth and family, but they were the daughters of men who could call themselves gentlemen and expect Esquire after their name, although they did not belong to the gentry, and bore no coats of arms. As for me—but you shall learn. It is painful to tell the truth about one who had done so much for me; but if I write my part of the narrative at all, I must set down exactly what occurred, and how my guardian behaved to me, and what he did for me, after I came home to him. I will exaggerate nothing, and I will try to write without anger or bitterness. But, indeed, I have long since forgiven.

Boscastle, when I got there after a long journey of sixteen miles up and down the Cornish hills, seemed to me the very queerest place one would wish to see. I left my boxes at the inn where I was set down, and without asking for my uncle, set off to find him somewhere in the town.

The houses of Boscastle stand for the most part on the slope of the hill above the little landlocked harbour. There are not many houses, because there are not many people living there. I looked from one to the other, wondering which was my uncle's. Standing apart from the small cottages, which made up most of the village, were two or three pretty villas. I at first made up my mind that he must be living in one of these; it had always formed part of my ideal life to live in such a villa with such wide and ample gardens as these houses possessed. But I thought of my letter and trembled. The rude spelling, the blunt expressions, the roughness of the letter, would not allow me to associate the writer with houses so pretty, trim, and well kept. I thought I would first try the humbler cottages.

One of these attracted my attention by the fact of its having a mast—with ropes, rigging, and yard-arm complete—run up in the front; also a flag was flying. Such an ornamental structure is like a sign-post: it shows that a nautical man lives in the house to which it belongs. I believe they are generally used to decorate the back garden, but at Boscastle the cottages have no back garden. Therefore, it was put up in the front, where a few broken palings served to form a small enclosure adorned by a tub and a heap of oyster-shells, broken bottles, and other things which in well-

ordered houses are generally taken away to their own place.

The house was a small stone-built cottage, with a window on each side of the door, an upper storey with a similar pair of windows, a slated roof, and a very large porch also built of stone and with its own slated roof. The porch was out of all proportion to the size of the house, being about as big as a church porch, with a window in it; it was set up sideways so as to face the east and to keep its back to the sea whence blow the south-west gales. It formed, in fact, except in such cold weather as seldom falls upon King Arthur's Land, another room to the house. In it was an arm-chair, and upon the arm-chair I saw an old man. His feet were crossed, his hands were folded, his head was on one side, his eyes were closed; he was at peace with all the world, for he was sound asleep.

Anyone who saw that old man sleeping would have fallen in love with him on the spot; he should have been painted for the everlasting admiration of the world; his hair was curly, and of a beautiful silvery whiteness; his features were strong and rugged as if carved by a skilful sculptor who knew exactly what lines to put in and where to put them, and did not spoil his subject by any which would interfere with his original conception; his cheek was browned by sun and rain and wind; his hands were not only browned by the weather but they bore also marks of tar; he wore white ducks, in the construction of which great liberality had been bestowed in the matter of stuff, a blue flannel shirt, a black ribbon tied loosely under the collar, a blue cloth jacket, and at his feet lay a "shiny" hat.

"This man," I thought, "is a sailor; he is clearly above the rank of common sailor; he lives in a house which is better, but not much better, than the neighbouring cottages; he is well enough off to be able to spend his afternoons asleep; he seems by his face to be a good old man; I believe he must be my uncle and guardian, himself."

My footsteps, as I lifted the latch and walked into the garden, awakened the sleeper; he opened his eyes, rubbed them, yawned, stretched his legs, yawned again, and finally stood upon his feet and stared at his visitor.

A very curious thing happened then. It takes a sleeper a few moments to recover consciousness; during those few moments

I observed a remarkable change come over the face of this benevolent-looking old sailor. He was not, in fact, so benevolent-looking awake as he was asleep. His face now showed a lower level of virtue; the lines changed, the features broadened, the mouth widened; it became a common face, that of a man, you could easily see, who was self-indulgent; his eyes were fiery, the veins in his forehead swelled up and became blue; one became aware of tobacco and rum without seeing any. And I began to hope that this person, at least, might not be my uncle. Alas! he was.

"Who are you?" he growled, still half asleep.

"I am in search of Mr. Stephen Cobble-dick," I said.

"Oh! you are, are you? Then," here he yawned, "you couldn't have come, my pretty, to no more likely a man to give you such information as you can trust about that man and gallant officer. Cause no man on this earth knows him better and loves him more nor me." He spoke with a slight American accent, which strengthened my suspicions.

"Pray, sir, are you yourself Mr. Cobble-dick?" It is so unusual a thing in this jealous and censorious world for one man to speak well of another, that I now felt almost sure of my conjecture.

"Why not?" he replied, giving question for question after the Scotch manner. "Why not? And what might you be wanting?"

"I want," I said—"I want a few words of conversation with him."

"And that, my dear," he replied airily, being now fully awake, "you shall have. Lord bless my soul! a few minutes? you shall have a few hours. Hang me if I wouldn't like to make it a few years. Step inside, my beauty, and sit down. If you are not too proud—as many of your sect, within my recollection, and not so very long ago, didn't used to be too proud—there's rum in the locker."

"I would rather," I replied, shirking the reference to rum, "talk outside for the present."

"Outside, my dear, if you please. Though if you ask them as once run after Steve Cobble-dick, his communications was straightfor'ard and his walk upright. Nothin' mean about Stephen, old or young. On the deck you might find him, the broad, the wide, the ever free, visible for all eyes to see. Therefore, pretty, whether in the open

or below, up steam and forge ahead, trustful. I am a listenin'. You comes here first, and you axes, sayin', 'Where is that pride and boast of the Cornish coast?' says you. Full speed it is."

I was perfectly overwhelmed by this burst, and could not for the moment think of a suitable reply.

"Ah! Time was," he went on, without waiting for one, "not so long ago, when they came to Stephen in swarms they did; not more than others he deserved, but more he got. Sought out he was, and loved by high and low. Sought for by short and tall, black hair and brown, curls and plain. Now he's grown old, they mostly ranges alongside of the curate. With his crowkett and his crickett, and his boat upon the bay. And it's hymns they do sing and sweetly they do play. Go on, my dear. Your cheeks is a thought paler than the cheeks in Plymouth Port, but you've a figger of your own as makes amends. You comes here, you says, for old Steve Cobbedick. 'Tis hard, they say at Boscastle, to find a properer man."

"I want to see him certainly, and, as I make out, you are yourself—— But I think I should like to talk to Mrs. Cobbedick first, if I could."

A look of the most profound amazement greeted this proposal.

"Mrs. Cobbedick? Mrs. Cob——" he cried. "Now, pretty, look at me straight in the face. Do I look like the sort to have a missus? Missus Cobbedick! My pretty, Stephen may have his tender points. Find them out first, and lead him with a hairpin ever after; he may have his weaknesses: them as knew him best loved him better therefor. You and your Missus Cobbedickery! Like Lord Nelson he has his faults. But to take and make a Missus Cob—— Come, young woman, say you didn't mean it. Young folks is skittish and will have their jokes."

"It was not a joke at all," I said, feeling rather frightened. "I am your niece, Avis, and I thought I would like to——"

"You my niece? You Avis? Ay, that's the name. Avis?" His face showed a variety of conflicting expressions, in which I vainly endeavoured to find one indicative of affection. Mostly, I read disappointment and disgust.

"You wrote me a letter——" I began, trembling.

"I did," he said. "D'rectly I found

out what had been a-goin' on. That's the way us poor fellows of the sea gets robbed."

"What do you mean?" I asked. For it really seemed as if he meant that I had been robbing him.

"I leave this girl," he replied, addressing the world at large and the high heavens, "in charge of a old woman to be brought up accordin'. I give over all my money to my man of business when I ships for North Carolina shore, and I tells him about that little girl. I keeps sendin' him over the money as fast as it comes in; never thinkin' nothing in the world about her; and when I comes home after close upon twenty years of work, I find they've been spendin' a matter of sixty pounds a year — nigh upon seventy pounds a year in bringin' of her up ontoe pride, luxury, kid gloves, high livin', and pianner-forty. That's the way they treated my money!"

"Then do you mean," I said, "that you did not intend to educate me?"

"I tell you," he replied, "that I clean forgot all about you. I gave the old woman a pocketful of money and I said: 'There's the little one, take care of her.' And then I came away and clean forgot it."

"Then you are not glad to see me?"

"Not at all," he replied. "I'm tarnation sorry, and that's a fact!"

"Then you would have allowed your niece to starve?"

"I dare say somebody would have taken you," he replied sulkily. "As for starvin' — well, there, I was in America. It wasn't no business of mine. I suppose there's the parish."

I stood considering what to do or to say. What I might have told him, with justice, was that he was a wicked and selfish old man, and that I owed him nothing since it was by an accident that I had been so well and carefully brought up. What I did say was this—being a good deal shaken by so surprising a reception, and feeling inclined to sit down and cry:

"Will you let me have shelter and food here while I look round and think what to do? I will pay you back, later on."

"I suppose I must," he replied. "You can come, for a little while."

It was beginning to rain, and I was glad to avail myself of the permission. I followed my uncle into a small sitting-room, intolerably close, and reeking with the smell

of grog and tobacco. I threw open the window.

"What are you doin' that for?" he asked.

"Fresh air. This room is stifling."

"Fresh air!" he growled. "If a sailor wants fresh air he goes on deck for it; there's the porch for you. Now then, sit down; let us hear if you have been taught anything useful to earn your grub. Seventy pounds a year! There's a outlay! How is that to be got back?"

"I am afraid," I said, "that I could never pay back all that money."

"No; that's gone, that is. Clean chucked away." He plunged his hands into his pockets, and looked surprisingly unlike the old man I had found asleep.

"I might be a governess," I suggested meekly, thinking how truly horrid it must be to go out as a governess. "I could teach what I have learned myself."

He nodded his head grimly.

"Some gells," he said, "go into service; there's house-maids, lady's-maids, and kitchen-maids; some go dressmakin', which is more genteel. There's always a openin' down Plymouth way, for a gell as is good-lookin', in the barmaid line. The sailors, both officers and men, like 'em pretty, and it's a cheerful life, especially for them as can take a joke and box a fellow's ears when he gets sassy."

I shuddered.

"I think I could not very well take that kind of place. But I am too much taken by surprise—I did not expect—I will try to do something and keep myself."

"Spoken like a honest gell," he said. "That's what I like. Give me a independent sperrit. As for hangin' around in idleness, I never could abide it in man or woman, specially woman. And for why? Because, the more work they do, the less mischief they make."

I thought this a favourable opportunity for asking a few questions about myself.

"Will you tell me," I said, "who and what my father was?"

"Let me see"—he looked at me thoughtfully—"you're my niece, ain't you? And Avis is your name? Likewise your nature." I think he meant nothing at all by this last remark except to gain time while he reflected. "You are the daughter of my brother Ben, now gone to Davy's locker, where he lays all his days in the Bay of Biscay oh."

"What was he by profession?"

"A Bible Christian, he was."

"I mean what was his trade?"

"Why don't you say what you mean then? Look here, my gell, if you and me is to continue friends, don't ask too many questions and let them questions be straight. He was third officer, he was, aboard a East Indiaman."

"Oh! and how did he die?"

"A shark took him off Rangoon. When the shark had done a-bitin' of him he was dead?"

"How long ago is that?"

"Nigh upon thirty years ago, that was. I was aboard at the time and see it with my own eyes."

"It cannot be so long, because I am sure that I am not more than eighteen."

"Then it was about eighteen years ago, I daresay. I can't be particular to a year."

"And my mother?"

"Here's more questions? Here's curiosity! What do you want to know about your mother for?"

"Is she living?"

He shook his head. "No, she's dead, too."

"What did she die of?"

"Yellow Jack. We buried her at Kingston in Jamaica."

"What was she doing in Jamaica?"

"How can I tell you what she was doing?"

"Did she leave nothing for me? Were there no books, no mementoes of any kind, not even a portrait?"

"She hadn't got no books, because she couldn't read; and nobody hadn't taken her picture."

"Who was she by birth?"

"She was—" He reflected for a few moments. "She was a Knobling, at Devonport. It was a most respectable family. You may be proud of your connections, both sides. Her father carved ships' figureheads in his back-yard, and her brother was transported for twenty years for forgin' the admiral's name—nothing short of the admiral, if you please, which shows a soarin' spirit—for five hundred pounds. She was known in port as Lively Bess, and her lines were gen'ally considered as clean cut, though built more for show than for speed, as any woman's on the coast."

I began to hope that the rest of the family had remained in obscurity. If this is the end of the romance, I thought it must be better to be commonplace, and

know from the beginning who one's parents actually were.

"Now," he continued, "have you any more questions to put?"

"One or two, if you please. Had I any brothers or sisters?"

"No; you were a lone orphan, by yourself."

"Do my mother's relations know of my existence?"

"No; they do not. And if you go to Plymouth you won't find them, cause they've gone, and it's no use expectin' nothing from them." He said this very quickly, as if afraid of my making demands upon them.

"I wonder how my mother came to be in Jamaica, when I was in England."

"I told you I don't know."

"Yet you were with her, you say, when she died. And with my father, when he died. It is very strange. Where was I born?"

"I never axed and I never heard."

"Where was I christened?"

"I can't say. Now you know all about yourself, and we'll change the subject. As for slingin' your hammock and stayin' here a bit, now."

It was evident that he would not answer any more questions. I therefore refrained from asking any, and waited for him to explain his views. This he did at length, and we presently proceeded to draw up certain articles which were to govern the household.

He started with the maxim that in marriage, or any other condition of life in which a woman is concerned, the only way to ensure happiness is to live as much apart from that woman as the dimensions of the roof will permit. He therefore placed at my disposal the room in which we were then sitting and one of the bedrooms upstairs. I was to have the right to open the windows in them as much as I pleased; he wouldn't interfere with me in any way. He, for his part, was to have the kitchen, the porch, and the other bedroom. And I was not to interfere with him. As regards the cost of my maintenance, that was to be defrayed by him, with such other small money as might be necessary to keep me neat; it being understood that these charges were to be considered as a loan, to be repaid afterwards when I began to earn money by going a-governessing, or being called to the bar, or by any other method which I should choose to adopt. The said cost of main-

tenance being set down at thirty shillings a week. When one comes to think of it, the bargain was not disadvantageous to him.

"And that, my gell," he continued, "is what I will do for you. Don't hurry yourself. Look round a bit. Stay a month or so. You can easily pay me back. Though as to that outlay, that seventy pounds a year, I reckon I shan't get that back in a hurry. Unless," he added reflectively, "that was to turn up which once I fondly hoped and still will fondly pray."

I did not understand what he meant, but was afraid to ask.

"Some British uncles," he said, with a rolling of his head which meant great pride and satisfaction with himself, "even among seafarin' men, would ha' said: 'Take and go and get your own livin'. You and your seventy pounds a year!' Stephen Cobblewick is not one of that sort. He is resigned. He says sweetly: 'Heaven's will be done!' He offers his prodigal niece forgiveness, and opens his arms with a uncular blessin' and a bedroom all to herself."

He did open his arms, but I did not fall into them. I would gladly have kissed that nobly benevolent old man whom I found asleep in a chair. But the other old man, so full of words, so selfish, so inflated with self-satisfaction, I could not kiss even to receive an "uncular" blessing.

The convention agreed to on both sides, my uncle, whom I propose to call for the future, partly because everybody called him so, and partly for other reasons which will presently appear, Stephen Cobblewick, went in quest of my luggage, and the new life began.

Thus was I enriched with relations, at last I had learned who my father was; it was now apparent that I belonged to the lower class of the Queen's subjects; it was also clear that the fewer enquiries I made into the history of my connections the better it would be for my pride. This was the end of my dreams. Instead of an affectionate uncle, I found a rough sailor, who had been made to pay for me without knowing it and by mistake; instead of a welcome, I received a plain notice that I must expect nothing more; instead of the pleasant ways of ladyhood, I was to look for a life of poverty, hard work, and dependence. It was with a heavy heart that I sought my room that

night and tried to face my fortune with courage.

Well, never mind the tears of disappointment at this sudden blow to my hopes. One may cry, but the inevitable had to be faced, and my new life began.

Its manner was simple. We lived, as Stephen wished, almost entirely apart. I "messed in the cabin," and he in the kitchen. After breakfast he took his pipe to the port, and sat upon the quay among the great hawsers, watching and criticising any little operation which might be in hand, such as the repairing of a ship, or unloading her cargo, or warping her out of port. This occupied the morning. Dinner was served at one. This meal was regarded by Stephen as a mere taking in of coal and water. You need not sit down to it, or wash your hands for it, or put on your coat for it, or pull down your sleeves for it, or brush your hair for it, or lay a cloth for it. Nothing of the kind ever entered into his head. He preferred to conduct his own cooking, on principles well known to the retired British sailor: a piece of pork should be boiled for so long; the flavour of a cabbage is enhanced by companionship with the pork in a pot; potatoes may be made ready in twenty minutes; onions may be fixed in less time; anybody can put a chop or a steak on a 'griddle'; victuals, when cooked, can be turned out into any dish that is handy, and then, messmates, fall to and eat, standing or sitting, as seems you best; for knives, what better than the great clasp-knife which does duty for everything? for grace, what better than a preliminary sharpening of the blade?

Dinner over, a single glass of grog, with a pipe, prepared him for his afternoon nap in the porch; another critical visit to the port completed the labours of the day, and brought nearer the evening, which he spent at the Wellington Arms. On Saturday evening he was always carried or led home by his friends; and he sang songs as he tumbled up the stairs to his bed. At first I was frightened, because a girl, who has been naturally taught to regard drunkenness as a most horrible thing, cannot suddenly be got to regard it without loathing. But one becomes used to most dreadful habits. On Sunday morning (being none the worse for his Saturday evening's excess) Stephen went to chapel. He had "found religion," he said, while in America. This made him conform outwardly to the Bible Christians.

I never observed that his religion produced the least effect upon his life, his manners, his thoughts, or his conversation.

I must confess that, next to the shame of having to take a lower level than I had fondly hoped, I was chiefly concerned with the necessity for earning my daily bread. I do not think there could have been anything more dreadful for me than thus suddenly to discover that there was absolutely nothing for me to fall back upon—no friends, no relations, no helping hands. I was waiting there like one of Nero's Christians in his prison, before being thrown to the lions who lived in the outer world. All I knew of that outer world was what I had gathered from the talk of girls in a little town and from certain novels. Women who have to work, I knew, are mostly horribly cheated and imposed upon; they are paid wretched wages; they have long hours; they cannot make money; they are scolded if they are not cheerful, and bullied if they are not brisk. And then there is so tremendous a gulf fixed between the women who work and those who do not. Alas! the latter, who should be kinder, make the difference felt. Perhaps in those days we thought woman's work more unlovely than we do now, when our sex are better paid, better taught, better able to hold their own. Yet I think that whatever improvements are made, it will always be the happier lot to sit at home and enjoy the fruits of others' labour. The novels of the time were full of the woes of governesses, their doleful lives, the wickedness of men, and the cruelty of women who engaged them. Even the more cheerful novels never held out a better prospect than that of marrying the curate. For my own part I always disliked that prospect, and hoped to marry a man of some more hopeful profession.

At the beginning Stephen left me altogether alone; by degrees he seemed to tolerate my presence; he even offered me the indulgence of a chair in his own porch; and, when he found out that I could listen, he gave way to a natural garrulity and began to tell me stories about himself. I learned from them that he had been a sailor for many years before the mast; that he rose somehow to the rank of chief officer; that he had made money in certain ventures the nature of which he did not communicate; that he had the good sense to bring the money home and give it to a trustworthy

person to keep for him ; and that, for reasons unexplained, he left the open sea and became a pilot in the port of Wilmington, North Carolina. When the war broke out he retired, having saved more money, and returned to England, resolved to roam no more.

I found that he was a very great boaster ; all his talk turned upon his own extraordinary ferocity, smartness, and insight. Certainly no sailor ever had so many adventures, or passed through them with such immunity from accidents.

Now in most of his perils he seemed to have been accompanied by a certain Captain Ramsay, who seemed to my uncle a sort of demi-god or hero. To me this model of a gallant and chivalrous sailor seemed a filibuster certainly, a pirate probably, and a murderer if he were a pirate. But my uncle was dominated by Captain Ramsay ; he seemed to lose sight of morality, honour, and religion in contemplating the career of this man. What in other men he might have loathed, in Captain Ramsay seemed additional proof of the man's heroic character. And although he professed, as I have said, to have "found religion," and was by profession a Bible Christian, he certainly lost sight of what he had found when he talked of his former chief. His admiration was perhaps heightened by the fact that the object was twenty years younger than himself.

Presently I made a very interesting discovery. It was Stephen's custom to vary his stories every time he told them, changing the place, the surroundings, and the circumstances, which he always gave in great detail, and the actors, whom he always described at length, giving, so far as he knew it, the family history of each in all its branches. Thus, if he began a story say at four in the afternoon, after his nap, he would make it last until seven or eight o'clock, when it was time to go to the tavern. It was startling at first, until I became accustomed to it, to note the discrepancies in his statements about them. Once or twice I turned his attention to my father or my mother. At different times I learned that my father had been an officer on board an Indiaman, a ship's carpenter, the purser, and the quartermaster. Also that he was bitten in two by a shark ; that he died of cholera ; that he was wrecked off Hallygoey Bay ; and that he was knocked on the head at a dignity ball. As regards my mother, she was by birth a Knobling, a Chick, and a Tamplin ; she was a native of St. Austell,

Looe, and Plymouth; her father followed the callings of figure-head carver, dealer in marine stores, market gardener, pay agent, and ropemaker. She died at Kingston, Jamaica (my uncle being present), of Yellow Jack ; and at Halifax, Nova Scotia (expiring in his arms), of frost-bite ; at Falmouth (my uncle buried her) of dropsy ; and at Wilmington (my uncle engaged in vain the first doctors) of earache. Why she was travelling about was never explained ; and, indeed, these statements were extremely hard to reconcile. In plain terms I found that Stephen was a most untruthful person ; that he was, so to speak, niggardly of truth, avaricious of expending facts, and of most brilliant imagination.

Again, there was an old woman who came every day to "do" for us. Stephen proposed at first that I should do her work so as to save the money, but I refused. She has nothing whatever to do with this story except for one thing. In conversation with her one day, I learned that she, being at that time nigh upon a hundred years of age, yet fresh and vigorous, with all her faculties about her, had known her master from childhood. And she told me, which was a very great surprise, that he had neither brother nor sister.

So that I could not be his niece.

I forbore to bring this discovery before Stephen, because I knew very well that he would at once invent some new story to account for and explain those which had gone before.

So far, therefore, from finding father and mother and the rest of it, I remained in as great an uncertainty as ever, and was only quite convinced upon one point, that not one word Stephen said could be believed.

I am ashamed, now, to think how poor-spirited and feeble a creature I must have been. Some girls would have strained every nerve to get some situation by which they could be relieved of such a dependence as mine. I only wrote to my schoolmistress and asked her help. She promised to "let me know, if she heard"—the usual phrase. Then I sat down and waited. I suppose she heard of nothing, because nothing offered. And I was too ignorant to know how to help myself.

Then I began to fall into bad ways. I had no companions. There were no girls at Boscastle with whom I could associate, being—save the mark!—a young lady,

whose mother was a Knobling born in three different towns and buried in three more towns, and whose father followed at least four professions at once and died in four different ways, all painful, and whose uncle had had neither brother nor sister ; with that distinguished connection I could not foregather with the honest rosy-faced lasses of the village. Stephen, again, was a Bible Christian, like most Cornish men. Now I could not bear the chapel, and yet I could not walk to Forrabury by myself and feel that the people were saying that this girl was she who went by the name of Stephen Cobbledick's niece, whereas it was well known that Stephen was an only child. It was a foolish feeling, of course, but I was young and shy. Therefore, I left off going to church, which was wrong. Presently, I left off going out for walks, except in the evenings, for much the same reason ; I fancied that people turned and looked at me, and thought they were sneering at me for not being like any other sailor's daughters, red-armed, bareheaded, and dressed in a flannel frock. What business had I, indeed, to go about in the disguise of a young lady ? Also, another terror, suppose any of my old schoolfellows should come to Boscastle and meet me ! With what face should I return their greetings ? With what shame should I explain my fall from the levels of Launceston respectability and tea-parties ?

That dreadful debt, the thirty shillings a week, went on growing. Stephen kept a book in which I was to enter the weekly bill. I did so faithfully, and used to look at the amount with a kind of terror. For it quickly grew from shillings to pounds—five pounds—ten pounds—fifteen pounds. I had nothing to pay it with ; I knew no way to make money ; I had no spirit to enquire or to try, being dejected with the trouble of my position and too much solitude. Yet the time must come when I should have to pay up in full. And the bill became a horrible nightmare.

It was in February that I went to Boscastle. It was four months afterwards, in June, that the time of my deliverance began, and kind Heaven took pity on a helpless girl, yet after such strange adventures as fall to the lot of few.

One thing alone redeemed the life. Stephen had a boat, which he called the Carolina. It was his custom, when the weather permitted, to go a-sailing in her

outside the harbour along the grand and terrible coast of Cornwall. It was not often in the stormy and windy spring of that year that he would venture in his little craft outside the quay. One day, however, he asked me if I would go with him. I acceded, listlessly. Now whether it was that he had experienced my powers of listening, or whether he found me good, as he said, at holding the lines and obeying orders, he asked me again, and so we took to sailing together every day that weather permitted, and while he talked I looked at the cliffs, and, although on shore I continually brooded over my unhappy position, the grandeur of the rocks and headlands grew upon me, and while the Carolina flew over the water I forgot my troubles.

Yet I never received from my guardian one word of affection or even friendship. I was with him on sufferance ; I ought not to have lived. The loss of all that money was a thing he could not forgive.

CHAPTER III. JACK BEARS A HAND.

"BOSCASTLE in the morning," said the young man who answered to the name of Jack, "is, if anything, finer than Boscastle in the evening." It was seven o'clock, and a sunny morning, and they were coming out of the inn bearing towels with intent to have a swim. "Poet, look about you, and think what rhymes to harbour, sunshine, landlocked water, green water, boats at anchor, and overhanging rocks ; because your poem on Boscastle will have to contain all those things."

They were, in fact, at the most curious place in all England. Here the sea has pushed a winding creek through rocks which rise steep on either hand ; where this "arm of the sea," as geographers call it, which is really only a finger, a baby's little finger, comes to an end, they have made a toy port by running out a pier, which leaves room at the end for a craft of reasonable smallness to be towed and warped in and out ; great hawsers as thick as any used to tow the hull of the fighting *Téméraire* lie about on the pier in readiness. There is generally one ship in the harbour and a dozen boats lying within the pier ; the water is so green and transparent that you can see the crabs, big and little, taking their walks abroad on the stony bottom ; on either side of the little harbour stand workshops, where pigmy things in the shipwright way are done to the craft which trade to Boscastle. Standing upon the hill

and looking seawards, you may mark how the little inlet winds between its guardian rocks ; if the stormy winds do blow, especially from the south-west, you may see the waves madly rolling and rushing with white foam into this narrow prison from the broad Atlantic. It is bad, then, for ships to be off this ruthless coast. Or you may see it when the sun is setting upon a cloudless day, when the sky and ocean have no parting line, and a splendid glow of colour lies upon the rocks and is reflected in the motionless waters below. Whether you see it in storm or in calm, you gaze upon a place as wild, as strange, as picturesque as any on the coast of England. The two young men bathed, sat on the rocks, looked at Willapark Headland and Meachard Island, where there is a great souffleur in windy weather, and presently made their way back with a view to breakfast. On their way they saw Stephen Cobbedick, the hero of last night's talk.

"See," said Jack, while the gallant tar was yet afar off, "there is the man whose niece has a figure exactly like his own. Remarkable, yet happy maiden ! We must make the acquaintance of that niece. I must draw her. She should be better known. Such a figure in one so young is a distinction I have never before met with. Good-morning, my captain," he shouted.

"Mornin', gentlemen," replied Stephen ; "fine mornin'. Are you for a sail this mornin'? I am going to get my boat ready while the rasher is a-fryin' and the water is a-boilin'. Soft tommy and cocoa, that's what we come to in our old age."

"No doubt," said the Poet, "when you were young it was curried peppercorns and boiling brandy. You've been a devil of a fellow, Mr. Cobbedick. Plenty to repent of in your old age—eh ?"

"You may well say that, gentlemen. Repentance is a solid job with an old salt like me. Lord! Lord! Well"—he heaved a deep sigh—"I dessay it'll be got through with after a bit. Though there's work ahead. It's a lovely breeze to-day. Come with me, and I'll show you as good a bit o' coast in a small way as you're likely to see. Not the Andes, nor the coast of Peru. I can't promise you that, but a tidy show of cliff."

They accepted the invitation and went on their way.

"The retired pilot," said Jack, at break-

fast, "seems inclined to be friendly. Give me another sole—I like them with the bread-crumbs—and pour me out more tea. I think this place is good for us. Let us roam no more, Poet. Let us fix the camp at Boscastle, go out sailing with our friend, sketch the cliffs—that's a splendid fellow with the ragged edges opposite Willapark—bathe in the morning, watch the sun set in the evening—Nature is good at scene-painting—and hear all the Pilot's yarns. What a splendid old liar it is ! No doubt you'll get some verses soon." Jack thought that verses came to poets like trout to anglers. And I daresay they do.

They found the old fellow, presently, on the pier waiting for them. There was lying in the harbour, besides a couple of schooners engaged in the potato trade, a little half-decked yacht, twenty feet long, moored beside the steps.

This was the Pilot's boat.

"Look at her, gentlemen," he said. "There's a beauty ! She was built at Falmouth, on lines laid down by me." This, like most of his statements, was a fabrication, to which he presently gave the lie by asserting that the boat had been built first for the Prince of Wales. "I rigged her ; I carved her figure-head ; I christened her ; I painted her. Nobody's hands but mine and the shipwright's touched that craft, and she's the fastest boat of her size that you'll find outside the Solent. I called her the Carolina in remembrance of the country where I made that proud and glorious name as a pilot which you've read of in the papers. And here comes my niece with the tiller and the lines."

The young men turned their heads quickly to see the niece who in figure, voice, and features was reported to resemble so marvellously her uncle. They looked and saw; their eyes caught each other's and fell with a kind of shame.

For they saw a tall and beautiful girl of eighteen or nineteen, of graceful carriage, stepping delicately over the rough stones. She was dressed simply, with a straw hat, white cotton gloves, and some sort of plain stuff dress.

They took off their hats and saluted this delectable nymph.

"Jump in, Avis," said her uncle. "Gentlemen, this is my niece. She ships as cox'un. I'm captain and crew, and you're the passengers. Now, then, all aboard."

Avis took her place in the stern, saying nothing. The young men sat on each side of her. If they caught each other's eyes they were abashed, thinking of the blasphemy against beauty of which they had been guilty in talking lightly of the pilot's niece ; and they tried not to be caught looking at her face, but this was difficult.

There is fashion in faces and figures as there is fashion in dress. Now in the year eighteen hundred and sixty-three faces were round, noses were tip-tilted, figures were short, tall girls were rare. Later fashions have caused the growth of tall and slender maidens with classical features. Girls are, I am told, instructed while at school how to conduct their growing according to the requirements of fashion. It is not an extra, and is taught to all alike ; but, of course, all are not equally successful. The prizes are obvious. Avis was one of the unsuccessful girls ; that is, she had grown beyond the fashionable stature, and her features were of the Grecian type. She wore her hair—unconsciously, for she thought little of the fashion in those sad days—in a simple knot, which went straight to the hearts of both painter and poet. The latter, after the wont of his tribe, began to think by what collection of words, phrases, and rhymes he could best illustrate this beauteous image. Poets and book-people are unhappy in this respect, that they must needs perpetually be the slaves of words. Jack, on the other hand, who was not concerned with description, immediately felt his heart leap up in contemplating the most perfect and wonderful work of creation, the last and best, a lovely girl. Stephen Cobbedick put out his sculls and rowed the boat along the narrow and winding creek to the mouth. Then he put up his sail, and the little vessel caught the breeze and glided out to sea.

They ran along the shore to the east, under headlands and cliffs of dark slate, mined by the sea into deep caverns, where seals resort, and fishermen go at night to knock them on their silly heads ; past broad bays and narrow coves and gloomy chasms in the rocks, which look like prison-houses for criminal Tritons. The breeze was fresh ; the sea was crisped with little waves, and heaving with the mighty roll of the Atlantic.

" Think," said the Poet softly, addressing no one in particular, but looking at the face of the coxswain, " how the waves would dash

and the spray fly over these cliffs in stormy weather."

The girl lifted her eyes, but made no reply.

" Ay," said the Pilot, " think of having this coast on your lee at such a time ! I was once—thirty years ago and more—sailing the Merry Maid of Penzance, two hundred ton barque, bound from Falmouth to Bristol Port." He proceeded at full length to tell how by extraordinary craft of seamanship he had succeeded, when such a storm fell upon them, and all thought they were doomed to certain destruction, in steering that vessel straight into Boscastle Harbour, and bringing her up taut and safe, not a spar carried away, nor a rope lost.

While he related this story his hearers were silent, looking about them. It was a dull story told with an immense number of details, with the names of the sailors who could be called upon to testify to the truth of his statement, if required ; a story which called for no listening.

" That is a most interesting yarn, Mr. Cobbedick," said the Poet ; " I am sure you have another to tell us. We would much rather listen than talk."

They listened while the garrulous old man told them another, and then a third, and a fourth, while still the little craft discovered headland after headland, and still the black inhospitable rocks rose steep and high, a fortification of Nature's own design.

Jack said not a word ; the presence of the girl, so silent, so beautiful, so mysterious, weighed down his soul. How could such a girl belong to such a man ? She had not spoken. Perhaps her beauty was one of those accidents whereby out of a rustic and common stock sometimes a beautiful flower is produced ; the village beauty is often the daughter of a hind no whit distinguished above his fellows ; her grace, her bearing, her face, comes to her as a gift of the gods ; such a girl should be called Theodora. But generally, when she speaks the charm is broken ; for out of that maiden's mouth there drop no pearls, but quite the contrary ; and the beauty of the village belle is too often of the kind which we are taught to associate with the devil ; it looks better upon the stage, whither it is generally brought, than in the drawing-room, where it is seldom allowed to appear. This girl possessed such a profile, such delicate drawing, such graceful lines, as might belong to the descendant of a hundred

queens of beauty. Where did she get it from? Was Cobbedick of aristocratic descent? Have noble families intermarried with the Cobbedicks? Are they connected, by half-a-dozen descents, with royalty? All the morning long they sailed; all the morning long the old Pilot gasconaded with story after story of his own extraordinary courage in situations where a lesser creature must have been crushed. Captain Ramsay was generally with him. He went on, the young men observed, without seeming to care whether any one listened or not; he took no notice whatever of his niece. The girl remained perfectly silent; once or twice, when the Poet addressed her by name, she replied with a "yes" or "no," without adding a word. Still Jack lay and looked, listened and wondered.

Presently their captain put the ship about and they made for home, beating up against the wind. Then there were fewer stories, because frequent tacks cause the thread of a narrative to be broken, and it is difficult when one is interrupted in the full flight of imagination and has to descend to earth to renew with fidelity, truthfulness, and consistency. Now, Stephen was always consistent in his details while the story lasted. He only altered the story when he told it on another occasion.

The voyage homeward, therefore, was more silent. The girl still preserved the same reserve; the Poet ceased his endeavours to make her talk. Jack still wondered. Presently the boat entered the creek of Boscastle; Stephen lowered sail, and in a few minutes they were standing on the quay. The girl, with a slight inclination of her head, walked quickly away.

"Poet," said Jack, when a few minutes later they were standing on the rocks above—"Poet, this is some of your handiwork. I have dreamed a dream. I thought we were in a boat out at sea; there were cruel cliffs along the shore with sharp teeth ready to grind and destroy any ship that should be driven upon them; there were black caves; there were long, hungry-looking reefs running out to sea; there were rocks of strange shapes standing by themselves in the water; there was a bright sunshine and a dancing sea; there was an old sailor whose talk was like the sound of the brook which ceases not, as the splash of the water from the roof on a rainy day; and there was a maiden—such a maiden,

so dainty, so sweet. Give me back my dream."

"Do you remember," Jack presently asked, "what the old fellow was saying?"

"Not a word," replied the Poet. "I was thinking how such a girl could be his niece. Why, his wife, and his daughters, his female cousins, and their daughters, his female connections by marriage, and their daughters, must be, or have been, or are about to be, dumpy, blowsy, full-blown, broad-nosed. Call that girl his niece?"

"I was thinking about her, too," said Jack; "I was thinking how she came there. Do you think she is really a person named Cobbedick? Beauty should have a graceful name. Every girl who turns out well ought to be allowed to change her name for something appropriate, just as the actresses do. Avis is pretty. How did she get that name, I wonder? Did you notice how sad she seemed? What is the matter with her, I wonder? She would not speak; she did not smile; her face is too pale; her eyes are weighed down with some grief. Good heavens! Does that old villain ill-treat her?" Jack clenched his fists as the thought came into his mind.

For two days they had no chance of seeing her again, because she did not leave the cottage. Yet the weather was fine. Was she ill? Did she never come out?

"I must and will see her," said Jack, on the third day.

His mind was made up; he would attack the citadel itself. He boldly went to the cottage; no one was in the porch; the door stood open; he stepped in; before him was another door; he knocked gently, receiving the customary invitation; he opened it, and found within the girl he desired to speak. She was sitting at the table; before her was a book, but it was shut; she was leaning her head upon her hand in a weary, listless way.

"Do you want my uncle?" she asked. "You will find him at the harbour."

"No," said Jack, turning very red. "I wanted to speak to you."

"To me?" She looked up wondering. "To me?"

"Yes." Jack blushed more violently. "I am guilty of great presumption in daring to call here; but," here he stammered, "the truth is, you are unhappy, and I want to know if I, if we, my friend and I, can help?"

"What makes you think that I am unhappy?" she asked coldly.

"Because you are pale, and your eyes are heavy ; because you stay in doors all day when you ought to be in the sunshine ; because you never once smiled during the whole time when we were in the boat. Do not think that I alone remarked these things ; my companion saw them, too. I know you are unhappy."

"You cannot help," she said sadly. "No one can help."

"Let me try," he replied. "Believe me, I am not forcing myself upon you through any idle curiosity. I know the world better than you—better, perhaps, than your uncle—"

She shuddered slightly, as if the name pained her. Was it then a fact that this old villain ill-treated her ? "Let us advise—"

"Oh!" she replied ; "you are very good, but you cannot help. If you could do me any good, I think I would take your help. You look as if you were a gentleman, and true."

"I do my best to be a gentleman, and true," said Jack humbly. "Try me."

She shook her head again. He saw that the tears stood in her eyes.

"Come," said Jack. "Will you do one thing which will help?"

"What is that?"

"Put on your hat and come with me for a walk upon the cliffs. That will do you good."

She hesitated. It was not through the fear that to walk with a young man would be improper, because she had never learned by experience or example that certain most innocent things may be regarded as improper. Not only was the girl innocent herself, but she was also ignorant of conventionalities. How should she learn them, brought up in a school where no men were present or talked about ?

"Come," said the tempter. "The day is bright and warm ; it is a pleasure even to breathe on such a day as this. Come with me."

She looked at him again. He was tall and handsome. Perhaps comeliness does produce some effect upon the minds of girls, though they certainly manage to fall in love with the most remarkably ugly men. The face was bright, too, and the eyes were "straight." She looked, and yielded.

Ten minutes later the port and town of Boscastle were lying at their feet far below them. They were climbing the headland

of Willapark. The girl was a good walker, though she had taken to bad ways of late, and stayed indoors.

When they reached the top, her pale face was flushed, and her eyes were bright ; the set look had left her lips, and on her mouth was a smile.

Jack was almost afraid to look at her ; she seemed to him, still, a kind of dream.

"Let us talk," he said.

They sat down, side by side, as if they had known each other since infancy.

The first day they talked about the place : the second day Jack felt his way to more personal and confidential talk : the third day he astonished himself by his boldness and success.

"Let me be your brother," he began, this artful deceiver, who would have refused the offer of becoming the young lady's brother if it had been made in earnest. "My name is Davenant, and they always call me Jack ; that is, my name is not John, you know ; but, if you will call me Jack, it would make things simpler."

"But I hardly know you at all," she replied, with a little laugh. "It is so odd to see a man for the third time or so and then to call him by his christian-name."

"Not if that man calls you by your christian-name. Let us try. Now then : Avis—what a pretty name!"

"Jack!"—she blushed a rosy red—"what a good name—for a man!"

"Avis," he repeated, "now then that we are brother and sister—let us take hands upon it"—he held out his right hand and folded hers with his strong grasp—"tell me why you are unhappy?"

"That would be to tell you all my poor little history."

"Then tell it me."

She told him, as we know it. He was a youth of quick sympathies, and guessed more than what she told him. How could he help ?

"Avis," he said, "this kind of life cannot go on. You must leave your guardian as soon as possible. Strange! I wonder if he told the truth when he said you were his niece ?"

"I do not know. The old woman who waits upon us says that he had neither brother nor sister."

"I do not believe that you are his niece at all," said Jack stoutly ; "but that does not matter. By his own showing, your education was an accident ; you owe him

nothing for that ; he makes no pretence at affection ; he even charges you an exorbitant sum every week for your simple maintenance ; you are left wholly alone and neglected ; you know no one in this place ; you must leave it quickly."

"But I can hear of nothing to do. My schoolmistress can find me no place as governess, and, indeed, I fear I am not clever enough to teach ; and I am haunted, day and night, with the thought that he will force me to take any place that I can get—even—even—to stand behind a bar and serve sailors with rum."

"By Heaven !" cried Jack, "that would be too much. But, Avis, there are other people in the world besides your schoolmistress. There are, for instance, the Poet and myself."

"Now I have told you," she said simply, "I feel as if hope was coming back to me. Jack"—she blushed again very prettily as she called him a second time by his name—"you will not think I am ashamed to work, and would rather live on with him in the little cottage. To be sure, it is not pleasant for a girl to be told that she is not, which she always thought she was, a lady, but only a common sailor's daughter, or a ship-carpenter's daughter, or whatever profession my uncle's fancy chooses to give my father ; and it is dreadful to think of leaving the very pretence and outward show of being a lady, and of descending to the lower levels ; and then there is the terrible debt. However can that money be paid ? I owe him now for fifteen weeks, at thirty shillings a week."

"I know a way of paying that debt," said Jack.

"I cannot take money from you, Mr. Davenant," she replied, with a sudden change in her manner.

"You shall not, Avis. Here is my plan. I am a painter, an artist. What I paint best, are heads. My pictures are worth—well, not too much, but something. I will paint your head, and I will offer you for the permission to make that painting the sum of thirty guineas. Then you can pay your debt."

"But that is taking money from you," she said.

"Not at all. It is earning money by work. You will have to sit to me a dozen times while I am painting it. That is your part of the work, and very tedious work it is. When the picture is finished, it will be sent to the Royal Academy, and, if

it is sold, will fetch a hundred guineas at least."

"But if it is not sold ?"

"Then it will be worth to me," said Jack, "a great deal more than a hundred guineas."

But she refused to take his money, though she promised to let him paint her. Two days afterwards she was astonished by a most unexpected burst of generosity on the part of Stephen Cobblewick, who informed her, with effusion, that she was to consider the debt due to him on account of board and lodging as wiped off the books.

"Stephen Cobblewick," he said, "was always a generous man. None of his enemies ever accused him of meanness. Therefore, when his niece came to stay with him, he was content to share and share so long as there remained a shot in the locker." So that, in fine, the past was to count as nothing, and the thirty shillings a week was to begin from that day only.

He did not think it necessary to inform the girl that in an interview with Mr. Davenant, that young gentleman had used strong expressions as to the vices of greed and graspingness ; that Mr. Davenant had further informed him that he was not fit to have a girl at all in his charge ; that it was his, Mr. Davenant's, intention to find a more fitting asylum for her ; and that, meantime, he would pay her generous benefactor for what he had already spent upon her since her arrival, at the rate of a pound a week.

Stephen was not one of those thin-skinned people who shrink into their shell on the administration of rebuke ; not at all ; it was customary on board ship both to give and to take admonition, with or without kicks, rope's-ending, cudgelling, or knocking down, and no offence on either side, or subsequent malice, grumpiness, or thought of revenge. He therefore took the money ; acknowledged by his salute Jack's rank as a superior officer, and made no difference in his cheerful manner when he met him that evening at the Wellington Arms. He liked Jack, in fact, all the better for it.

Mr. Davenant, he said, was born to tread the quarter-deck and to give his orders through a trumpet. He should have been sent to sea, by rights, where he would have turned out an admiral or a pilot, at the very least.

As for the Poet, Mr. Cobblewick regarded

him with aversion. He was always sneering, he said ; he turned up his nose at the finest yarn, and asked searching questions as if they were not true.

He was not such a fool as not to see that the girl was pretty, and that Jack had eyes, and that the best way to get rid of his niece, and at the same time secure a firm hold upon her, financially, was to facilitate, as well as his inexperience would allow, the growth of a tender feeling towards the girl as well as the interest she had already aroused in the heart of the young fellow from London.

He wanted ardently to get rid of her. She was in his way ; he could not live as he liked while she was there ; he wanted, as most people do, to revert as much as possible to the ways of the Primitive Man ; he would have gnawed his bones, cracked them with his teeth to extract the marrow ; he would not have been unwilling to clothe himself in skins, if there were any to be got ; and he would have made his cottage like the cave of the flint weapon period. It is painful to reflect that mankind have not only to be dragged against their will to the chilly heights of culture, but that they must be kept there forcibly, else they will relapse and wallow once more in the mire. Poor Pat, who loves the society of his pig in his cabin, is a type of what we should all become but for the tyranny of people who are not only clean, but also powerful.

Next to getting rid of her, he wanted to recover the money which had been, against his knowledge, spent upon the girl. Seventy pounds a year ! This dreadful prodigality for ten years at least, besides what he had spent before ; and when he complained to his man of business with whom he had left his money, that unfeeling person called him names. He reckoned it up. Seventy pounds a year for ten years : that made seven hundred, with which he could have bought half-a-dozen cottages, the only form of investment which he knew. Then there was the interest : three pounds a year, at least : thirty pounds more gone. Now, if a gentleman—Stephen thought that all gentlemen were rich—were to fall in love with Avis, it would be hard if he could not extract from him, either before or after marriage, the return of that sum, with a little more. “I should make it,” he said, with glistening eyes ; “I should make it—ay—a round thousand, or fifteen hundred pounds. Hang me, if for such a girl as Avis a man ought not to pay two thousand

down. And that would make me very comfortable. Very comfortable, indeed, it would. Ah ! if you do keep a goin’ on a castin’ of your bread upon the waters, how it does come back, some day, to be sure ! If I’d forty nieces, blowed if I wouldn’t treat ‘em all the same way ; make ‘em ladies, with silk stockings and white hands, and take two thousand pound apiece for ‘em all round when their chaps came to marry them. It’s beautiful ! It’s what the lawyers call, I suppose, a marriage settlement. I only wish I’d had forty—ay, or fifty nieces—or a hundred, at the same rate.”

With this blissful dream of a numerous and penniless family all dependent on himself, all girls, and all bringing him large dots, he indulged his waking hours.

“I must take you back to town, Jack,” said the Poet.

“Not yet. I must paint her face. I have promised that.”

“Do not promise too much,” the Poet added, with a meaning in his words. It was at this period that the conversation was held which I have already recorded. “Do not promise too much.”

Jack turned from his friend with impatience ; because at this time he was ready to promise anything.

She was changed in those few days since first he saw her ; no longer silent and depressed. She was bright, smiling, and ready to talk and ask questions. Life had begun to look cheerful again ; hope was in her heart, but not yet love. She was humble ; the knowledge of her birth had made her more humble than before. She was ignorant of the world, but she knew enough to be sure a gentleman ought not to marry beneath him ; not to marry at all seemed a light affliction to her, and she was resolute that since no gentleman could marry her, she would marry no one at all. Had she been brought up among girls of Stephen Cobblewick’s class, she would, on the other hand, have dreamed continually of some gentleman falling in love with her. That is, indeed, the dream of the London dressmaker, and, I daresay, of the humblest girl that lives. The king and the beggar-maid ; the Prince and Cinderella ; how many stories have been written, how many dreams dreamed, upon this theme ? Because poor Avis had been taught to believe, as all gentlewomen try to believe, that a gentleman cannot fall in love below his station, she concluded that she was never to marry at all. A sad thing, to have no lover, no husband,

and no joy of little children ; a grievous thing, yet a light thing in comparison with that threatened descent into the rough world from which her new friend promised somehow to rescue her. She had no thought of love. Jack, the kind and generous-hearted Jack, pitied her loneliness ; he would find something for her, some place somewhere ; she asked not what or when ; she left it trustfully to him.

The portrait, too, was begun. While she sat, Jack could gaze upon her without reproach.

As he looked and transferred her features to the canvas, he fell more and more in love. Yet he said no word of love ; nor did he by any of those outward signs, common among lovers, betray his passion. For as yet he was uncertain what to do ; he thought of her happiness, or tried to think of that, first ; but while he set himself to work to reason out the thing calmly, the recollection of her voice, which was cheerful and sweet—not low, which is so common an affection among women—came upon him, and his heart leaped up ; or he thought of her eyes so limpid and so deep ; or the outline of her face, which he drew perpetually upon every margin ; or her tall and lissom figure ; and he could not reason because he felt.

At first he argued with himself that a girl living in such a manner could not but be coarse in her ideas ; yet she had so lived, he remembered, but three short months, and it was pain and misery to her. There are minds which can never be coarse and common, just as there are some which can never be pure and sweet.

It had not entered into his scheme of life to marry early. He was one of the men who preach the doctrine that it is best to make your way first, your name, if that is possible, and your income, before you commit yourself to the chances of matrimony. Now, his name was not yet made, but was already in the making, so to speak ; and his fortune was all to be made. As for any feeling that he would marry beneath him, that was far from being in his thoughts at all. Who marries Avis, he said, cannot possibly marry beneath him.

It was so pleasant, this time of roaming about with the girl, talking, sitting together, walking on the cliffs, or sailing in the boat, that he was loth to disturb it. The days went on, and every day he saw more of her ; the honest fishermen of Boscastle took it for granted that they were courting. Avis had no shame to run and meet him while he was

yet afar off ; she had no shame in telling him all she thought and hoped ; she showed him her very soul unconsciously in perfect trust. Together they made journeys to see the places of which the girl had heard so many weird legends in her childhood. The Castle of Tintagel, St. Nighton's Keive, and Minster Church, where Jack made sketches always with Avis in the foreground ; and they went to Ferrabury Church together, Avis haunted no more by the foolish fear of meeting any of her schoolfellows.

"I told the girls," she said, "that I was going into the world to find a father and a mother, and, perhaps, a sister and a brother. But, Jack, I never thought that I should find so kind a brother as you."

Remarks such as these are difficult to receive, under similar circumstances. Yet Jack, through some fear of the result, or some scruple about himself, would not say the words which would sever that fraternal bond.

CHAPTER IV. RAMSAY, ALIAS ANGEL.

Now, while these two were rapidly passing through all those nicely graduated emotions of admiration, wonder, respect, longing, and ardent desire for each other's society, which make up and lead to the delightful passion of love (which, unless a man feel it at least once in his life, he had better never have been born), an event happened which was destined to trouble everything. Always that detestable hitch in human affairs which interrupts and hinders ! The American poet observes on this point, that the course of true love may fitly be compared with the flow of the Mississippi ; for it is a full and mighty stream ; and it is irresistible ; and it has snags ; and there are in certain of its latitudes alligators in its waters, and rattles on its shores, besides fevers. The snags, also, are not found in the early reaches of the river, which further assists that poet's metaphor.

The event was this.

Stephen Cobbedick was one morning seated on a hawser on the harbour quay. His short pipe was in his mouth, his legs were stretched out, and he was contemplating, with an air of great satisfaction, the wreaths of tobacco-smoke, for they contained a delicious castle of Spain connected with the "marriage settlement" of his niece. It had occurred to the wicked old man that, while he was about it, eighty or even ninety pounds a year might as easily

be set down as the cost of Avis's maintenance as seventy, and the same sum might be charged for every year of her existence. Now, as she was eighteen years of age, that meant a total of sixteen hundred and twenty pounds, as he chalked it up on a neighbouring stone.

"She owes me," he said, "sixteen hundred and twenty pounds; or, countin' the interest out of which I have been choused, seventeen hundred pounds in all. There's a sum! She shall go for it, though. I shall charge nothing—nothing at all—for loss of her services and agonies at parting from my dearly beloved niece. What a uncle I am!"

He was, indeed, as he was about to prove, the most remarkable of all uncles recorded in history, except perhaps Richard the Third, the guardian of the Babes in the Wood, and the Barber Fiend.

So rapt was he in the vision of his own goodness, that he paid no attention to the operation conducted just below him, of inserting a new plank in the side of a coaster, nor did he hear the footsteps of a man who was walking leisurely towards him. He was a thin, slenderly-built man, about the average height, dressed in a black frock coat, buttoned up, black trousers, and a tall hat. He might have been a dissenting minister, or a traveller for a religious publication, or a temperance lecturer, or a promoter of public companies, so much did his appearance betoken ostentatious respectability. His age might have been anything, but was certainly over forty, as was manifested by the crow's-feet round his eyes. His features were good and certainly handsome, though too long and sharp; his eyes were keen and small; his lips were thin, with a nervous twitch in them, and they were flexible; his hands and feet were small and delicate.

He stood awhile looking at the good visionary, who sat gazing into space as he counted up his gains, and heard him not. The stranger smiled. "What mischief is the old man thinking of now?" he murmured. "He looks aged, but there's work in Stephen yet."

He stepped over the ropes which lay about the quay, and laid his hand on Stephen's shoulder, not heavily, but with a quick hard grip; as if he had caught his victim at last.

"Shipmate," he said, "how goes it?"

Stephen started, looked up in his face, jumped to his feet, dropping his pipe, which was smashed on the stones, and forgetting

his vision of marriage settlements. Never was man more astonished. His jaw dropped, his eyes opened, he spread out his hands in helpless astonishment.

"Cap'en Ramsay!" he cried at length. "It is hisself."

"Shake hands, old salt," said the other. "It is myself, I guess. No other hoss has got into this skin. Why, there; it's cheerful lookin' at your old face again. Kind o' brings back the old days; doesn't it?"

"It does; it does," responded Stephen. "But come, Cap'en, this demands a drink."

"Hold hard; you come in my tow so long as I'm here," said Captain Ramsay. "Let us go to the bar."

They went there, and drank each other's health at the Captain's expense.

"And where," asked the stranger, "can we have a place where we can sit and talk by ourselves, with nobody prickin' up their ears to listen?"

Stephen led the way to his own cottage, where appropriating Avis's room for the occasion, they sat and talked.

"To think," cried Stephen, "that I should live to see you a settin' down in my own house."

"Here I am, you see. I was at Liverpool, when I remembered that you had given up the piloting and were come home. And by reason of your sometimes answering to the name of Boscastle Steve, I concluded to run down here, and prospect around till I found you."

"In my own house," replied the other with iteration; "the same house as I bought with half-a-dozen others when I come home eighteen years ago, after that little job of ours, where we done so well."

"What little job?"

"You know, the black job, when we shipped—Ho! ho!—that crew of darkies in Boston, pretendin'—Ho! ho! ho!—that we were bound for Liverpool, and run 'em down to New Orleans and sold 'em every man jack."

"I remember," Captain Ramsay replied; "and divided the plunder. It was risky, but creditable. It wouldn't quite do to have shown up in Boston for a while after that, would it?"

"And what have you been a doin' of since, Cap'en? Have you sot down to enjoy the proceeds of honest industry, or have you fooled away your pile?"

"I've fooled away that pile, and I've made more piles, and I've fooled them away."

"Euchre?" asked the pilot.

"And monty, and any other darned thing going. Guess if the Prodigal Son had gone to New Orleans he would have dropped the old man's dollars in a way to reflect credit on that city."

"Ay, ay. When I set eyes last upon you, Cap'en, you was a Salem man, and a Quaker by profession when in shore-goin' togs, and religion was useful. And you'd changed your name from Ramsay to Angel. Ho ! ho ! Angel !"

"Your memory is so good, old mate, that I must ask you to remember nothing about me 'cept what I tell you. And what I tell you now is this : I am Ramsay again, Jefferson Ramsay, Commodore in the Navy of the Confederate States. I was born and reared in Norfolk. I am Secesh to the back-bone. Bully for the blue flag ! I hail from the South, the land of chivalry, where no abolitionist skunk shall be permitted to dwell, and all the whites air gentlemen born, most of them of the ancient aristocracy of Great Britain. We air fightin', Sir, for liberty and our constitution. The Peculiar Institution has been forced upon us by our ancestors. We shall consider it when we have established our freedom from the North. Abolition we abhor, because we love our niggers too well to give them the liberty they would convert into license. No, Sir, the South at this moment is the proud champion of constitutional right, and the defender of morality and religion."

He delivered this harangue with a slowness which greatly added to the effect.

Stephen Cobblewick was affected almost to tears. "He ought," he exclaimed, "to have been a bishop !"

"So I ought," said Captain Ramsay, "if everybody had what was best for him. I should like to be a bishop—in England."

Stephen then began to narrate his own experiences. The Commodore of the Confederate Navy sat in the attitude of listening, which was polite, because the Pilot was prolix. After a quarter of an hour or so of patient pretence, he pulled up the narrator short.

"Say," he began, "what do you mean to do next ?"

"Nothing," replied Stephen.

"What ? Stay in this forsaken hole ? Sit here and rot like an old hulk in a harbour ?"

"Ay. Sit here is the word, Cap'en. Time's come when I'm bound to lay up. I've got religion; I've got a dozen cottages;

I collect the rents of a Saturday; I'm sixty-five years of age ; there's no pilotin' to do; and as for black jobs, why I doubt whether that trade will ever again be worth what it used to be. Lord ! sometimes, when the minister is a boomin' away in the chapel, I sit and think of the droves of 'em, bought for a song, as one may say, sometimes took for nothing, drivers and all, hurried over the Atlantic in a clipper that could show her heels to any British frigate afloat, and put up at New Orleans or Havannah for——" Here he stopped and sighed. "It's comfortin' to think of those times. It brings out the flavour of the hymns. You should get religion, Cap'en."

"Some day, may be, Stephen. 'Spose there was pilotin' to do ?"

"Ay, ay ?" The old fellow sat upright and listened intently.

"'Spose I was to say to myself: 'I've got a job that wants a light hand, a quick eye, and a knowledge of the coast ?'"

"What coast ?" asked Stephen.

"The coast of North Car'lin'a, and the port of Wilmington."

"He means blockade-runnin' !" cried Stephen with enthusiasm. "Where there's danger, there's Cap'en Ramsay ! Where there's money to be made, there's the gallant Cap'en ! Where there's fightin' and runnin' away, and a shootin' of six-shooters, there he is in the middle of it, whether it's filibusterin', or slavin', or the South Sea trade, or runnin' the blockade ! What a man ! What a Nero !"

"You've guessed the job, old shipmate. Some men would ha' let me beat about the bush for an hour. But you've got a head upon your shoulders, Stephen, screwed on tight, right end up, and eyes in that head as can see straight. You've guessed it !"

"Go on, Cap ; go on." This sagacious flattery increased the good old man's desire to hear more. Blockade-running was next to piracy ; therefore dear to his heart. For he was one of those perverse brethren who ever love the thing that is illegal, because it is illegal.

"I've been blockade-running since that little game began, and I haven't been caught yet. And I don't mean to be, though they've put on the coast some new and fast cruisers. For I've got, at Liverpool, loading for me, a craft, Stephen, as would make your eyes water. Yes, I reckon you would weep for joy that you had lived to see such a craft."

"Ah !"

"Such lines; such gracefulness; such lightness; such speed."

"Oh!"

"You shall see her, Stephen. Whether you fall in with my proposal or not, you shall see her and judge for yourself. Now, listen. In my last trip we did well; got in and out without a brush or a shot. Some of the boys aboard were pretty rough—that's a fact—and just before we sighted Nassau there was a little difficulty between the pilot and the chief officer. The chief officer didn't matter, because his sort, though he was a plucky one, air plentiful, and Nassau swarms with young English chaps mad for a run; but when the pilot had to send in his checks too, and we heaved both overboard at once, it was a real loss, and rough upon us, as was generally felt. For pilots air like angels—they air skarse."

"Young men," said Stephen, "will be young men. I've drawed a bowie myself before now, and let daylight into the other chap. But for both to go at once! That seems a most extravagant waste."

"So, being at Liverpool, I remembered you, Stephen. I said: 'This is a chance which does not often happen. If Stephen Cobbedick gets it, he is a made man.'"

"I'm too old," said Stephen.

"Nonsense. You're as young as you feel. Your hand is firm, and your eye is straight; and what's more, you know every inch of the coast."

"I do. No man better."

"Why, then, we're half agreed already. And now, old pal, you shall see what a thing it is I am goin' to give you a share of." He pulled some papers and the stump of a pencil out of his pocket. "First, you shall have, for the double trip, seven-hundred—and—fifty pounds—nigh upon four thousand dollars."

"What?" Stephen jumped out of his chair. "How much?"

"Seven—hundred—and—fifty pounds sterlin'. Half paid down on the day you go aboard; the other half when we get back to Nassau. Stop a minute, I haven't done yet. Every man is allowed space for his own ventures. You shall have room for a dozen cases if you like. More than that, I've bought them for you, and they are shipped ready for you. I give them to you."

"If I could!" cried Stephen.

"Why not? What's to prevent?"

"There's that gell o' mine; my niece. Hanged if I don't think they kep' her alive a purpose to worry an' interfere."

"Leave her behind."

"I might do that."

"A dozen cases, all your own. They're full of the things that sell in Richmond and the other places. There's women's stays, kid gloves, tooth-brushes, Cockle's pills, lucifer-matches—man! whatever you take will sell, 'less it's raw cotton."

"Ay."

This good uncle was meditating a scheme for the happiness of his niece.

"As for danger, there's none. Not that you are the man to show a white feather. There's plenty at Liverpool could do it, but I want you. 'Steve Cobbedick,' I said, 'would enjoy the business. Steve Cobbedick, as I've known these twenty years and more, since I was little bigger than a boy.'

"You were on'y next door to a boy," said Stephen, "when you came aboard as third mate. 'Twas at Havannah. You were then, you said, the son of an English gentleman, and you'd run away. You shipped in the name of Peregrine Pickle, which afterwards I saw in a printed book. That was the first"—he looked round him with admiration—"of his names and his descriptions. Never any man had so many parents. And wicked? How a lad so young could pick up so much wickedness, the Lord knows. Yet there he was. And drink? Like a mermaid. And swear? Don't name it. And fight? Like Great Alexander; for the walloping of a nig, to get the work out of him, I don't suppose there was ever a lad, Spaniard, Mexican, or Yankee, could come within a mile of him. And the sweetest temper with it; not proud, not puffed up with vain conceits; easy and affable with all alike. And at a dignity ball, the cock of the walk, though Mexican yellow noses, which are well known to be more jealous than an alligator, were waitin' outside with knives sharpened on the door-step to have his blood."

"Then you will go with me?" said the hero of this praise, unmoved. "You will be my pilot? I'm part owner of the ship and cargo, as well as skipper."

"When do you want to sail?"

"In a fortnight."

"Give me three days. I think I can go, Cap'en. It's only that cussed gell. She's cost me a thousand pounds a'ready, and I want to get that back. I think the job is as good as done. Three days, my noble Cap'en."

In the evening Stephen produced an

electrical effect in the smoking-room of the Wellington Arms by the introduction of his friend Captain Ramsay, who was, he added, Commodore in the Confederate Navy.

Now Captain Ramsay was, as has been explained, a familiar name with every man who was privileged to hear the conversation of Mr. Stephen Cobbedick. For whenever he had to tell of a deed of peculiar atrocity, an act of more than common treachery, a deed which made the flesh to creep and the blood to boil, a transaction more nefarious than is usually considered possible to humanity, he fathered it with every tribute of praise and admiration upon Captain Ramsay. And this heroic Viking actually stood before the peaceful folk of Boscastle in the flesh. A small, lithe, quiet-looking man, with quick bright eyes, who sat quietly beside Stephen, and for a while said nothing.

The sexton, the blacksmith, and the shipwright stared mutely at the stranger, who presently began to talk and to smoke cigars.

"Yet he is a tiger, Jack," whispered the Poet, in answer to nothing.

Jack opened the conversation by asking if the Commodore had left the States recently, and what he thought were the present prospects of the South.

"Sir," replied that officer, "the present prospect is certainty. The North is in her last throes; they've got through all their Irish and Germans; they can't raise recruits nor money; they have been—but they won't own up—already licked into a cocked hat; their generals air like whipped curs with their tails between their legs; their papers air clamouring for peace; and the South will be asked by the North, before very long, to be good enough to take Maryland and Washington, and go about her own business. Wal, we do not wish to bear malice: we will let them alone, provided they let us alone. But go we must, and go we shall. That is so, gentlemen."

"Of course," said Jack, "you speak as a partisan. We hear other accounts from the North."

"You hear, sir, whatever lies the meanest press in the world chooses to tell you. What I tell you, sir, is fact."

Undoubtedly a very strong adherent to the Secession Cause. Salem a long way behind, clean forgotten. Pilot Cobbedick looked on in admiration.

Presently the Commodore passed from Confederate matters, which, considering the

way in which the end has falsified his predictions, together with those of a great many far-seeing English editors, would be stale in the repetition, and, backed up by his old comrade-in-arms, launched forth upon the sea of general experience and personal reminiscences. Like Stephen, he had been everywhere.

Stephen, for his part, was guarded. He said nothing, except to murmur applause, or to put a leading question.

"What do you think of him?" asked Jack, when the evening was over.

"What I said before, my boy; a tiger," replied the Poet. "He looks it."

Avis's reflections were exactly the reverse of the Poet's. She thought that if the man was a tiger, as according to the statements made by Stephen he most certainly was, he looked like a lamb. His voice, to her, was so gentle from the moment he saw her; his manner so mild, so caressing; his very attitudes so modest and unassuming, that she could not believe, from his appearance, the stories told about him. He a pirate? He a tiger? No; the imagination of Stephen must have invented all.

CHAPTER V. THE COURSE OF TRUE LOVE.

THE way—which the wise man found marvellous in his eyes—when there are three together, and one of them is a maid, is that one of the other two must go away by himself. The Poet, therefore, went away. He adored Avis after the poetical manner. It is very well known how Petrarch found consolation. In like manner, this poet sat on a rock; thought of this girl's eyes and her wondrous face; made her immortal—at least, those of his friends who reviewed him said so—in undying verse; and presently, with tranquillity of mind, married another woman. You never find a poet, mind you, going distraught with love.

As for the other two, they went about without him, happy with each other; they wandered afield or along the rough Cornish lanes, with cobbled walls on either side; they gathered the wild roses; they sailed in the boat; they climbed the steep sides of Tintagel. They were yet in the sweet misty time which comes before the spoken love; it is then that each to each puts forth invisible arms; ghostly embraces follow, which are but half felt; the very air seems rosy with the glow of sunrise; it is a time of imperfect joy, of sweet

uncertainty, hopeful fear, tender doubt, and ever-growing faith. A woman, perfect of her kind, once told me that marriage, against which she had nothing to say, was not so happy as the time of plighted troth ; and this, again, not so sweet as that uncertain time of undecided wooing, of admiration, and of attraction.

This time must have an end. That is most sure. Julie de Rambouillet marries M. de Montausier at last, and Penelope is rewarded in the end. But it is pleasant while it lasts ; and, in the opinion of some, the time which follows is more pleasant still.

It was a new and divine joy for Jack to read, day after day, the soul of this innocent, fresh, and beautiful girl, whose heart turned unto things good and beautiful, as the hemlock turns to the east. A girl's thoughts are mostly, when she finds expression, clad in the words of others ; she is not good at finding words for herself, she stammers when she tries ; it is a shameful thing, in a way, for her to tell, in words all of her own, and directly, the things she feels rather than thinks. Therefore every girl is a mystery and an enigma. The better she is, the higher her aspirations, the more mysterious is she to the lover who would fain understand her deepest thought, her most secret hope and wish. Mostly, however, the talk of lovers seems, to the outer world, commonplace.

"Since Captain Ramsay came," said Avis to Jack, two days after the arrival of that worthy, "I hear of nothing but blockade-running. My uncle wants to go. He has got out charts and maps, and spreads them on my table ; he pores over them, with his thumb on the places which he is interested in. And he has been throwing out hints—you know his hints are broad ones—about being able to go if I were not in his way."

"Perhaps," said Jack gravely, as if he believed what he was saying, "Stephen thinks he is getting old, and would like to make better provision for you, in case— You see, Avis, you are a girl, and have not been brought up to fight your way in the world, which is a place where, unless you are provided with cushions and hassocks stuffed with bank-notes, you find the sitting pretty hard."

"I do not think that Stephen cares much about providing for me," said Avis gently. She was not a girl who readily thought evil or ascribed motives. But it was ridiculous to imagine Stephen Cobble-

dick as anxious to work for the sake of herself. "I hope you have got easy cushions for yourself, Jack."

"Mine are easy enough for me," he replied gruffly. "The question is—Avis, will you marry a poor man ?"

"Jack ! " For, at the word "marry," all the possibilities of the situation rushed upon her mind.

"I am getting on, but an artist's life is uncertain. Still, if you love me as I love you, Avis— Darling, will you take me ? "

She knew, she found out when he spoke of love, that she already loved him ; she felt that life would be intolerable without him, but she was ashamed ; she could not, so surprised, accept him.

"Oh," she said, the tears starting to her eyes, "you ask me to marry you, Jack, out of your kindness ; just as you forced your way to me, because you pitied me. You cannot love me."

"My dear," he said, taking her hand, "I have always loved you. I loved you I think, from the very first, when you sat in the boat so sad and silent. Take me, my dear, and let your uncle go blockade-running, or blockhead-breaking, or anything he pleases, with his amiable pirate and murderer, Captain Ramsay. Avis, once more, can you love me ? Will you send me away empty, after all our talks and walks and happy times, Avis ? You called me your brother once ; I will not be your brother any more. I must be your lover, Avis, or nothing."

She shyly put out her hand.

"I cannot give up my friend," she said, smiling through her tears ; "and if he means what he says, and his handmaid has found favour in his sight, and he will take her for his sweetheart, who loves him—"

The noblest man in the world to marry the noblest woman ! This is a dream which has always presented itself to me in the form of a nightmare. One can imagine the loneliness, the terrible isolation of a household so perfect as to be a standing and perpetual reproach to all the world ; one may feel how husband and wife, after many months of keeping up an exhibition of the noblest virtues to each other as well as to all the world, would at last fly apart with execrations, and descend to a lower level and—separate. I have, besides, never met any whom I could call either the noblest man or the noblest

woman. I have always found in the former certain failings due to vanity, jealousy, love of adulation, or even a passion for port ; and in the other I have sometimes noted a tendency to positiveness, smallness, and inability to recognise in the world anything but what she sees. I am sure that Avis was neither the noblest nor the best of women. To begin with, she was not one of the best educated, had few accomplishments, knew nothing of society at all, was imperfectly instructed in the fashions, and had little to recommend her except her beauty and—an old-fashioned quality, but uncommon in these days—her virtue and goodness. But, for an average pair of imperfect mortals, with a good average share of virtues, and a general leaning to what is good rather than to what is evil, and a power of unselfishness, and a belief in each other as well as in goodness as an abstract quality, I declare that Jack and Avis promised to be as well mated as Adam and Eve, who, as we know, were imperfect.

"Poet," said Jack, later on, with a strange light in his eyes and a little shaking in his voice. "I have asked Avis to marry me. She is good enough to take me."

"I congratulate you," replied the man of song. "My belief is that you have done the best thing you possibly could for yourself. Now that you are engaged, take her away as fast as ever you can ; the sooner the better."

"We shall be married," said Jack—he repeated the word, as if it gave him gratification—"some time in the autumn. I've got to find a house and furnish it."

"Don't wait for the autumn. Take her away, out of this, as soon as you can."

"What do you mean ?"

"I mean that the atmosphere is dangerous."

"If you will explain——"

"Well, then, what I mean is that I have eyes in my head, even although I wear spectacles ; that I have been using them ; that I have been watching the piratical scoundrel who calls himself Commodore Ramsay—no more an officer of the Confederate States than of the British Navy. He is a tiger and a man-eater."

"Go on—go on."

"And I think he has cast eyes of affection on—on your fiancée."

Jack clenched his fists and swore a great oath.

"They are unholy eyes, Jack ; take her away at once."

"He cannot run away with her under my very eyes," said Jack presently. "If he dares to say one word to her, by Heaven——" Here he choked.

In these days it is extremely difficult for an Englishman to threaten an enemy. He cannot make daylight through him with a revolver, as a Texan might or a gentleman of Colorado. He cannot call him out, with a choice of pistols or swords. He cannot even promise to punch his head, because it is undignified. He can do nothing. The law is to do everything. Yet, even in the most law-abiding country in the world, there is always that possible return to the habits of the prehistoric man, who carried a stick, sharpened its point in the fire, and carved his flint axes, mainly for the purpose of enjoying himself upon his enemy, should he get the chance.

One thing Jack could do—which he did, and with surprising results. He would see old Cobblewick and tell him what he was going to do. Accordingly, he sought the worthy Pilot, and, without thinking it necessary to ask the permission of Avis's guardian, which is a formality observed by most suitors, he informed him that he was about to marry her.

"Since," he said, "she is good enough to think me worthy of being a husband, we shall be married as quickly as possible. So you will be free of your charge, and happy again. You will be able to live as you like, never open the windows, never clean the place, spread your dinner on the floor, and get as drunk as you please."

This, to be sure, was exactly what Stephen most wanted ; but he was not going to let the girl go without getting what he could for himself. And when Jack used the word "worthy" in his humility, Stephen thought of the other meaning attached to the word "worth." Therefore, he replied :

"Easy a bit, young gentleman ; soft and easy is the word. Now, before we go a bit further into this business, we must have the marriage settlements laid down and agreed upon."

"The marriage settlements ?"

"Just so, Mr. Davenant"—the old man looked unspeakably cunning—"just so, sir ; the marriage settlements. Of course

you don't expect that I am goin' to let Avis go with nothing."

Jack was rather surprised at this. Still, as a guardian, Stephen was perhaps justified in expecting something to be settled on Avis.

"I am not a rich man," he said ; "and I cannot settle money upon my wife which I have not got. But I will insure my life for her benefit, for any reasonable amount. That ought to satisfy you."

"Insure your life for her benefit!" Stephen was astonished at the young man's stupidity. "Well, I don't mind ; that's just as you like. I was talking of marriage settlements, not insurin' of lives for her benefit. Who's a-talkin' of her benefit?"

"And I was saying that I will secure her from want by means of an insurance in place of a marriage settlement. That is quite a usual thing to do, believe me."

"Lord ! Lord !" cried Stephen. "Why can't a man speak up plain and direct ? When I said marriage settlement, I meant marriage settlement ! If you want me to go and beat about — this tack and that tack — like a lawyer, say so ; if not, answer me plain and straight. How much am I to have ?"

"You to have ? You ?"

"Me, Mr. Davenant. Do you suppose that I've paid for that gell's education, as fine as if she'd been a duchess, sixty pounds — I mean ninety pounds a year, money out of pocket for eighteen years, for nothing. No, sir ; I calculate not."

He added the last words for the sake of emphasis, and with due American intonation.

"Good Heaven !" cried Jack.

"I think if you tot up that sum, Mr. Davenant, you will find it come to nigh upon one thousand and eight hundred pound. Then there's the interest, which would be—ah, I dessay a hundred pound more. That makes, altogether, pretty near two thousand pound. Now, the man who marries that gell has got to make a marriage settlement upon me of all that money as I have laid out upon her to make her what she is. She can play the pianner, I am told ; she can sing, when she isn't sulky, like a angel ; she can patter French, they tell me, in a way as would astonish you ; she can dress up to make her husband proud ; she can talk pretty, when she isn't in a temper ; and

she can go along, holdin' of her petticoats in her hand, like a lady. That's what she is, a real lady to look at ; besides belongin' to a most respectable family. It was for this that I laid out the money. 'Do not grudge it, Stephen,' I says to myself ; 'it is a-castin' upon the waters, it will be brought back ontoe you, like a runaway nig.' And I make no charge for the love, nor for the affection, nor for the grief — which might settle on the chest, and be the death of a man, or turn to lumbago — at losin' of her ; and as for——"

"Stop !" cried Jack, "you infernal old humbug and impostor."

"Mr. Davenant !" Alarmed at this response, Stephen began to wish he had put his figures a little lower.

"I know what you have done. How you went away and forgot all about the child ; how the man who held your money went on paying for the girl and placed her in a respectable school ; how you welcomed her back with reproaches and grumbling. Why, she owes you nothing, not even thanks. Now listen, and then shut up. I shall give you not one farthing ; do you hear ?"

"Not one farthin'? Do you mean, Mr. Davenant, that you will not pay me back even the money I spent on her ?"

"Not one farthing. That is my answer. You will do what you please ; but beware of any harsh word or act to Avis."

Jack withdrew, leaving Stephen in a state of such disgust and disappointment as he had never before experienced. For the hope of getting back his money had grown in his mind during the progress of Jack's brief courtship, until he almost saw it within his grasp. It was because he felt so certain that he had allowed himself to multiply the amount by about three. It may be owned that if Stephen had been acquainted with the nature of geometrical progression, and its relation to compound interest, his claims would certainly have been far higher than they were. But to get nothing, absolutely nothing at all ! Was that possible ? Was it, this good man asked, just and Christian so to act ? And how, if not by means of Jack, was this casting of the bread upon the waters to be returned to him ?

As for Avis's marriage that was the very thing he wanted. Nothing could possibly suit him better. She would be off his hands, and out of his house ; he need not trouble about her when he was

away. But the cruel disappointment, and when he had made quite certain that Mr. Davenant was a real gentleman, who would be only too pleased to pay for his fancy.

The conversation took place in the porch, while Avis herself was sitting on the cliff thinking over the wonderful happiness which had befallen her. So disturbed in mind was her uncle, by Jack's ungentlemanlike and mean response to his proposal, that he was fain to have a tumbler of rum-and-water at once, and to load another pipe. The grog despatched, he sat gloomily in his arm-chair, growling menaces, interjections, and expressions of discontent, as one who has believed too much in humanity, and now, like David, is inclined to say, in his haste, unkind things about all conditions of men.

While in this mood, he was joined by Captain Ramsay, who, without speaking, took a chair and tilted it against the wall so that he could sit back comfortably. As usual, he was provided with an immense cigar, which he smoked continuously.

After a while, the Commodore spoke.

"Well, mate, got an answer ready?"

"I'll go," said Stephen.

"What about the gal?"

"She may go—where she darn please," replied the Pilot. "She may go to the devil. I wish I'd never seen her; I wish I'd never spent a farthing upon her. Gratitude? Not a bit; whistle for it. She may marry who she likes. I don't care who she marries; she may——"

"Dry up, man," said Captain Ramsay. "There's more to be said. Let us understand one another. You will come with me?"

"There's my hand on it," said Stephen. "When I came home with my little pile I said I'd have nothing more to do with niggers. Besides, I've gut religion. And I never did love the blacks; not to feel kind o' hearty toe-wards their shiny skins; not even when I was shippin' of 'em across the pond for the Cuban market. Some skippers loved 'em like their own brothers and cowhided 'em like their own sons. Put their hearts, they did, into the cat-o'-nine-tails. I never did."

"As for your religion," said the Commodore, "and as for your virtue—there." He made a gesture which implied that he believed Stephen's late-born virtue to be, like other flowers of autumn, a pale and

scentless weed. "Well, that's settled. Half the money shall be paid to you before we ship, the other half when we get back to Nassau; the cases of notions I promised you shall be yours. Did I ever treat an old shipmate unfair, Steve?"

"Never, Cap."

"Very well, then. If we're caught—but that's unlikely—we shall have a taste of a Northern prison; if not, we'll have another merry run, and another at the back of that. And long may the war last, and happy may we be!"

Stephen sprang to his feet and waved his hat with a cheer.

"Now, Steve"—the Captain was more than affable, he was affectionate to-day—"there's another thing. That gal of yours is as fine a gal as one would wish to see. I don't remember, nowhere, any gal as come nigh her for good looks and a straight back; and I conclude that she hasn't got any call to make that fine figure of hers look finer by stuffin' and things."

"No call whatsoever," said her uncle; "she is a Cobblewick, which accounts for her figure—where she takes after me—as well as her face. But if you come to gratitude——"

"Now, shipmate"—the Commodore was still lying back in the chair, with his feet upon the back of another chair, and he spoke without taking the trouble to remove the cigar from his lips—"I've took a fancy to that gal o' yours, and I tell you what I'll do for her—I will marry her."

"You, Cap'en? Marry my gell?" Here, indeed, was condescension! The greatest man then living in the world, the most perfect hero, the man who had set at defiance more laws than any other man, proposed to marry into Stephen's family! He forgot that he had only an hour before received Jack's announcement without opposition; he was dazzled by the brilliancy of the prospect before him. The simple honour of the proposal took away his breath. So surprised and delighted was he that he even forgot his projected marriage settlements, and never once thought of even suggesting the subject to his revered chief. Probably he knew beforehand that the demand was not likely to be well received. Gentlemen like Captain Ramsay, with a wide experience of humanity, do not as a rule receive statements which accompany claims with a leaning in the direction of credulity.

"Look at me, Steve," said the Commodore.

"Yes, Cap; I am a-lookin' my level best," Stephen replied, gazing hard.

"I am forty years of age; I am hard as nails; I feel as young as a ship just out of dock; there are dollars in the locker and more coming in as long as this providential and religious war goes on. And that gal has fetched me as I never thought to be fetched again; she is the kind of woman a man would not get tired of. Neat-handed, quick, as proud as Lucifer, and as beautiful as a picture. I'm willin' to marry that gal; we'll take her over to Nassau and marry her there, if you like; or we'll have the marriage here, if you like; or anywhere."

"Have you spoke the gell?" For Stephen recollects suddenly that Jack had "spoke" the girl, and he felt that there might be breakers ahead.

"No; you can tell her what she's got to do," said the Captain. "When she knows, it will be time for me to come along with soft sawder."

Then Stephen remembered another thing.

"When I saw Liberty Wicks last," he said, "and it was at Norfolk port, two years ago, he told me that you were married. He'd seen you somewhere North with your wife. Said she was a sweet and beautiful young thing—black hair and eyes—answered to the name of Olive. You can't marry two wives, Cap; not even you can't do that, 'less you keep 'em to different sides of the sea."

The Captain's face darkened. Stephen knew the expression; it meant mischief for someone.

"Liberty Wicks," he said softly, "was quite right; I was married. But now I'm free."

Here his choler rose, and he swore vehemently against some unknown person of the opposite sex, whom Stephen supposed to be his late wife.

"Did she die, Cap? Did you—now—chuck her overboard?"

He made this abominable suggestion as if it were a most probable and even praiseworthy thing to have been done.

"No; I wish I had. I found what seemed a more artful plan. I took her to the state of Indiana, and I divorced her."

"Oh, you di-vorced her. And how did she take that. Did she take it quiet?"

"No; like wild cats. She followed me

around; last thing, she came over to Liverpool and found me out. There she is now."

"Ah," Stephen sighed; "women never know what's good for them. When we act for the best, accordin' to our lights, they screeches for the worst. You was too kind to her, Cap'en, I doubt."

The words which fell from his chief's lips proved that if he had ever been too kind he was now repentant, and would do so no more.

"It might be awkward, mightn't it," asked Stephen, "if that young woman was to turn up at Nassau just when you'd got the hammocks slung comfortable, and the cabbages planted in the back garden, and the scarlet-runners climbing pretty over the wall?"

The Captain remarked curtly that if a scene of rural felicity, such as that described by the Pilot, was to be so interrupted, chucking overboard or something equivalent, short, direct, and efficacious, would certainly follow.

"Then," said Stephen, "here comes Avis, and if you'll leave her to me, Cap, I'll speak to her now, at once. She is a good girl, and her feelin's jumps with her uncle's and runs along the same lines. A gay and a gallant sailor I've always promised her; but such a honour as this was beyond her hopes and her prayers. For which may we be truly thankful!"

CHAPTER VI. NOTHING BUT A COMMON PICK-ME-UP.

LIFE had become suddenly delightful to Avis. Wonderful it is to note the difference made by a little sunshine in the heart. Deliverance had come to her in the shape considered by maidens the most desirable, namely, a lover. What were past anxieties now? No more worth considering than the earache she might have had when a child. She felt kindly disposed, and even affectionate, towards her uncle—the more so, of course, because she was going to leave him. Odd, that parting should produce much the same effect on the mind towards the people you love and those you do not. Therefore, when her uncle invited her to converse with him for a few moments, she blushed a rosy red, and her eyes lit up, and her lips parted with the sweetest smile ever seen, for she thought that Jack must have been with her uncle. So he had, but the pride and splendour of the second offer had, for the

moment, completely driven the first out of the old man's head.

"That is right, my dear," Stephen began kindly; "sit down and be comfortable. Because I've got a thing to tell you that'll make you jest jump clean out of your shoes for joy; never had a girl such a fine chance."

"What is it?" she asked, thinking, little hypocrite, that she knew very well what it was.

"I've always said to myself, Avis," he began with solemnity, having just thought of a lie quite new and appropriate to the occasion, "when I was considerin' out in Carolina about my little maid here in Cornwall, that the time would come when a husband would have to be found for her; and I was glad that she was bein' taught to play the pianner, because I was wishful that she should have a husband out of the common. Therefore you were brought up to full blow-outs of duff, lie in your bunk as long as you please, never ordered before the mast, run about as you like, and all."

"That is quite true," said Avis humbly. "I fear I have not been grateful enough."

"This is not the time," said Stephen with pride, "to talk about gratitude; I've found the husband for you."

"Then he has spoken to you," Avis said with brightening eye. "He said he should tell you as soon as he could."

The Captain, thought Stephen, forgetting Jack for the moment, must have had a word or two first. To deny it showed a lack of candour; still, it made his own task easier.

"He certainly has spoken," Stephen replied, "else how should I be a tellin' of it to you? So he spoke to you first, did he? Well, he certainly always was a masterful man, with a way of gettin' over 'em most surprisin'."

"Why," asked Avis, surprised, and not quite understanding what was meant, "how do you know that?"

"How do I know that?" This in great contempt. "Have I got eyes? Have I got ears? Can I remember? Well now, Avis, tell me just exactly what he said."

"I can't," she replied; "I can never tell any one what he said. But I can never forget what he said."

"I don't want the soft sawder," said her uncle, leaning back in his chair. "Tell me now"—he looked very cunning

—"did he ask you anything about the money?"

"No; what money?"

"My money, stupid! Did he ask how much I had, and where it was stowed, and if it was easy to get at, and could you find your way to the place where it was kept? No? Well, that shows the story about the little pile at Nassau may be true." It might also be taken to show how deep is the trust reposed in each other by gentlemen of the Pilot's school of honour. "Did he say anything about goin' away?"

"We were to go to London, he said."

"London, eh? Ah! he told me Nassau. But that doesn't matter; and perhaps he forgot you was a sailor's gell, not to be frightened with a little blue water. London, did he say? Well, of all the artfullest—Did he promise you anything?"

"Only—only that he would make me happy always—"

"I know—I know; they always say that. Did he promise to give up his gamblin'?"

"Gambling? Why, Jack does not gamble."

"Jack," too, the Pilot repeated with admiration. "What a man! He'll be Timothy to one, and Jack to another, and Julius Caesar to a third. Not gamble, my dear? Why there isn't—not even in Mexico nor Rooshia—a man who will begin earlier nor leave off later. Gamble? While a red cent is left behind. As forbettin', he'll bet on anything; if he was makin' up a party to go out and be hanged, he'd lay his money on a bet to kick longer than any of 'em. Not a gambler? Well, my dear, gamblin', in a way, is a nice quiet amusement; it keeps a man out of mischief; he can't be shootin' around, that's certain, nor drinkin' cocktails in a saloon, when he's quiet and comfortable over a pack of cards or a pair of dice. No woman of sense need be jealous of her husband so long as he's usefully occupied that way with his friends. But, if I was you, Avis"—here Mr. Cobbedick bent his head and whispered—"if I was you, and goin' to marry him, I'd begin by gettin' all the money—every dollar—in my own hands first. Have that handed over before the parson brings aboard the weddin' tackle. Let him gamble with the next stroke o' good luck if he likes."

"I cannot understand it," she said. "Oh! I am sure you are mistaken."

"I am never mistaken. How should

I be mistaken in such a simple matter? As for drink, I suppose it's no good askin' him to make promises. They always promise, and they never keep their word."

"But Jack does not drink."

"Doesn't he?" The Pilot laughed. "That's what he has been tellin' you, I suppose. Not drink? I've seen him drink a three-decker full o' Bourbon, and then ask for more. No," he continued reflectively, "I think about the drink you'd better let him alone. I'm tryin' to advise you for the best, Avis, my gell, because you are but a young thing, and you know nothing of the world, though you've been brought up in virtue and the maxums of your uncle. I think you'd best let the whisky alone. Only, I should say, when he is on the burst, and pretty certain to come home at night ragin' around and dangerous in a peaceful house, I would contrive to let him have the cabin all to himself, even if you had to sleep on the bare boards."

"Good heavens!" cried Avis; "what does this mean?"

"As for jealousy, now, you must remember he's not a common man. They run after him wherever he goes. Wherefore you keep your eyes shut and your tongue quiet, whatever you may see or hear. And then, my dear, you'll have a peaceful and a lovin' life, with such a husband as all the world might envy. But let him be. Else—well—theer."

Avis shook her head in sheer bewilderment.

"I never thought," the Pilot continued, "that so great a honour would be done you. To me you owe it all. Some honest sailor lad, I thought, skipper maybe of a coaster, or officer in charge of a gentleman's yacht; but such a MAN"—he put the word into capitals—"such an out-and-out, straight up and down man as you're goin' to have, never occurred to me. Why, girl, if you was goin' to marry a duke, I couldn't be better pleased. Dukes haven't been in command of clipper ships; dukes haven't been chased night and day for a fortnight; dukes haven't been chased day and night by British cruisers, and yet landed their cargo safe, and never a man or woman lost all the way from the Gold Coast to Cuba; dukes can't run a blockade. Why, he's been put in the papers, he has; they know all about him in New York and Liverpool; they point him out when he lands, and when he drops into a saloon they crowd around to stand him drinks."

Avis clasped her hands to her head. Was this a dream?

"Pray," she said, "will you tell me of whom you are speakin'?"

"Why, of Cap'en Ramsay, to be sure; who else should I be speakin' of?"

"I am speaking of Mr. Davenant. It is he, not Captain Ramsay, who has asked me to marry him. Has he not spoken to you about it?"

"I haven't set eyes on him," said the mendacious one. "This is a pretty thing to be told, this is; with Cap'en Ramsay—actually Cap'en Ramsay—holdin' out his hand!"

"He said he would speak to you at once," replied Avis.

"If he had a-come to me, I should ha' turned him out of the house. Who's Mr. Davenant?"

"I have told him I would marry him."

There was no mistake about the determination with which the girl spoke.

Mr. Cobbledick replied in the manner customary to the British sailor. Then the girl repeated that she had given Mr. Davenant her word. Then he tried persuasion.

"But you won't, Avis, you won't," he said in a voice which seemed calm, but had in it that little tremor which sometimes betokens a coming storm. "You won't, my gell, will ye?"

"Oh! uncle," she replied, "I have promised him. And, besides, he is the only man I could ever love."

"I don't know nothing about love," said Stephen. "Look here, lass; my old shipmate, Captain Ramsay, as gallant a sailor as floats, has asked me to let him marry my niece. Now, I haven't got two nieces, but only one; consequently, if I don't give you to him, there's nobody to give. Therefore, as my word is passed, you must marry him. What's your word compared to mine?"

"But I cannot," said the girl.

"But you must, and you shall," said her uncle, "or I'll know the reason why. So don't let us have no more words about it. This is a very pretty state of things, when a gell thinks she's a-goin' to marry who she pleases."

The girl did not burst into tears, nor did she faint, nor did she turn deathly pale, nor did her hands tremble, as they use in novels. Not at all; she only repeated, firmly standing before her uncle:

"I cannot and I will not."

"Then," said Mr. Cobbedick, "I'll lock you in your room till you do."

"No, you will not," she said; "because if you are rough and violent, I shall call out of the window to the first who passes to fetch Mr. Davenant."

The enraged guardian swore that a dozen Mr. Davenants should not prevent him from doing what he liked with his own. Was she not his niece? Did she not owe him obedience? Had he not brought her up with his own hands almost! What sort of a return was this for all he had done for her? Where was gratitude? Where filial piety? Where the reverence due to parents and guardians? As for Mr. Davenant, he should learn the strength of a British sailor's arm, with a club at the end of it. He should remember the name of Cobbedick all his life; he should be sent back to his own place with broken neck, broken ribs, broken arms, and broken legs. Did Avis think he would let a whipper-snapper, a counter-jumper, a measly fine gentleman, a painted peacock, with no money even, such as Mr. Davenant, stand between himself or Avis, and a man who was a man?

Avis let him run on without interruption. Then she repeated that she had given her word, and she would keep it.

"By your own showing," she said, "you would have me marry a man who is a gambler and a drunkard, who breaks laws and lives a violent life. Instead of him I have taken a gentleman, who is, I am sure, a good and true man. And he says that he loves me." The girl's eyes softened. Then at the sight of this old man in undignified and foolish rage they hardened again. "Have you not often complained of the expense I have been to you? Have you not told me to look about for work to do? Have you not threatened to make me a barmaid? Have you ever shown me the slightest affection, that I should consult your wishes?"

"That's the way with 'em." Stephen sat down, ready to weep over the ingratitude of womankind. "First you stint and spare for 'em, then you give 'em all they wants, pamper 'em, dress 'em up fine, and they turn upon you. Gratitude? Not a ounce. Respect? Devil a bit. Do what is best for 'em, lie awake and think how to make 'em happy, and this is the end of it. Best way after all"—he shook his head as if this conviction were forced upon him—"to wallop 'em till they follow to heel obedient, like them black Australian gins,

the only women in the world truly and religiously reared."

"You will be reasonable," Avis went on, disregarding this attack upon her sex. "You will reflect that I am not bound to consider your wishes at all, as you are chiefly anxious to get rid of me; and that I have seen a great deal of Mr. Davenant, while I know nothing of Captain Ramsay except what you have told me about him, which is quite enough to make me refuse outright to marry him—"

"I know him," interrupted Stephen with rising wrath. "Isn't that enough? Now, I will have no more talkin'. Will you marry the Cap'en?"

"No, I will not."

"Then pack—put up your things, and pack. Go, I say. Leave the house. Pack."

Avis hesitated a moment.

"Go to your lover; let him take care of you."

This was bringing things to a crisis, indeed. The plain speech of which the honest sailor prided himself had never been so plain before. Avis had seen him grumpy, greedy, lying, and drunk; she knew that her uncle based his conduct of life on maxims disliked in certain circles, and that he admired things which many moralists condemn. She had never before, however, seen him in the ungovernable rage which now possessed him. He stood, shaking both fists in her face; he spluttered and swore, and then could find no words but more curses to express his meaning. His face was purple with wrath.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for Avis—because things looked much as if the Pilot would begin to act upon his newly-discovered principle for the training of girls, and wallop her there and then—that the discussion was here interrupted by the arrival on the scene of Captain Ramsay himself.

"Be off, I say. Out of the house with you."

More spluttering. Then he saw, through the tears of his righteous indignation, the very man who was the innocent cause of it all.

"Cap'en," he cried, hoarse with passion, "look at this here. Say, did ever man see the like? I've brought up this gell, since she was a baby, in the laps and legs of luxury; never asked her to do nothing for me but once—that was to-day—and she won't do it."

"What was it he wanted you to do,

if I may ask?" said the Commodore gravely.

"He asked me to marry you," said Avis.

"And will you not?" He spoke softly and solemnly, as if he had thought out the matter with gravity and deliberation. "Can you not? I am, it is true, older than you, and I may seem an unfit companion for a girl so young and so pretty. But I am not too old, child; I am as steady as ever, and as strong."

"Always as strong," murmured Stephen. "Nothing makes no difference with him. Not years, nor Bourbon whisky, nor Jamaica rum, nor six-shooters in a difficulty, nor English cruisers, nor Yankee blockaders. Here's a MAN for you."

"Can you not regard me with kindness, Avis?" the hero went on.

"I am engaged to another man," she replied simply.

His manner was beautiful; it was at once respectful to himself and to the young lady; his voice was gentle, and his eyes were soft; he looked almost good.

"I am very unfortunate," he said; "we sailors spend our lives apart from the refinement of women; we are apt to get rough and coarse—I know that; and when I saw you first, Miss Avis, you looked so sweet and good that I said to myself, 'Here is a girl who would lead a man to heaven, even against his will.' And you are really engaged?"

"I cannot break it," she said; "I would not, if I could."

"No need then to say what I hoped to say; that all my dollars and my estates are yours if you will take me." Stephen began to wonder what estates were these. "There are gardens and palaces, flowers, fruits, horses and carriages, and a faithful servant to command—myself."

He smiled sadly as he spoke.

Avis shook her head.

"It is impossible," she said.

Then Stephen broke out again.

"Come," he cried, "don't let us waste time; get out, and let me see your face no more. Come, Cap'en, don't take on; there's lots of better girls than her. Let her go. I give you five minutes." He braced himself up as if for a tremendous effort. "And now you have drove me to it, I've more to tell you—"

"Easy, Stephen," said the Captain.

"Lucky for her," the old man growled, "that you came in. But she shall hear it. I thought to die with the secret. Nobody shouldn't know nothing

about it, only me. Fine airs you've gave yourself all along. Pride that was—pride in bein' a Cobbedick. That's what made her stick out her chin and hold up her petticoats, wasn't it? Gar! And all for nought; for now I'll tell you, madam, that you're no more a Cobbedick than the Cap'en here—not a touch of the Cobbedick about you, as might be known by your conducks. For, whereas a true-born Cobbedick ever loves a sailor, and would never marry, could she see her way out of it, any but sich, here we see you, to the shame and disgrace of Boscastle port—which is proud of the Cobbedicks, little though it be—refusing a Nero, and takin' up with a mere landlubber and counter-skipper."

"If I am not of your family," asked the girl, as soon as she could get in a word, "who am I?"

"You are nothing but a Common Pick-me-up." Stephen pronounced these words with peculiar emphasis, so as to bring out the full measure of the contempt involved. "A Common Pick-me-up, you were."

"What is that?"

"You was found (by me) on a raft in the Bay of Bengal; picked up (by me) off of that raft. You was in the arms of a dead Indian ayah. There was three sailors on that raft who was also dead. You was wropped up in four silk bandanners when we carried you off to the ship, a baby of a year old or thereabouts, and gave you to a negress to nurse. You a Cobbedick? With an ayah. Wropped in bandanners. On a raft. In the middle of the starved sailors. Nursed by a negress. A Common Pick-me-up!"

The Pilot spoke as if the recovery of babies in this manner was so common as to entail disgrace upon all so found.

"Did you find nothing more about me?"

"No. The men searched the pockets of the dead sailors for their money. Then they chucked them overboard and broke up the raft, because such things is dangerous. You're nobody's daughter, you are."

"At all events," said Avis quietly, for even a worm will turn, "it is some kind of relief to know that I am not yours, or the daughter of anybody connected with you."

"As for your names," he went on, "I gave you the name of Avis because it was my mother's, and Cobbedick because it

was my own. Give me them names back. Avis"—here he made a gesture as of one who takes a thing from another and dashes it on the ground—"Avis, now you've got no christian-name to your back. Cobbedick"—here he made a similar gesture—"Cobbedick, now you've got no surname to your back; and now, my Lady No Name, you may pack. You and your Mr. Davenant."

The Captain stepped forward.

"Pardon me, Miss Avis, are you engaged to Mr. Davenant, the young gentleman at the hotel? I am sorry indeed that my unfortunate aspiration"—he smiled sadly—"should have led to these disagreeable consequences. Had I been aware of your engagement, I should have been the last—"

"Oh! yes, yes," said Avis; "but I am nearly driven mad by this man's talk and violence. Let me go."

"Yes, let her go; a Common Pick-me-up!"

Mr. Cobbedick waved his arms and shook his head, with that well-known gesture of contempt, chiefly practised by ladies of the lower rank, which consists in tightly pressing your mouth and closing your eyes, while you shake your head.

"Stay, Stephen." The Captain pushed him gently back into his chair. "We must not manage things in this way. If Miss Avis cannot see her way—being already promised to a happier man—she must not be abused or ill-treated. Though, no doubt, you mean it for the best."

"Any way," said Stephen, "she knows the truth now. And she can go."

"No, Stephen, she cannot go"—Captain Ramsay stood between them like the guardian angel, or the representative genius of benevolence—"things must not be managed in that way. Miss Avis will remember that, niece or not, she has enjoyed your protection for eighteen years. You, my old comrade"—it was remarkable how the gallant Commodore seemed to drop the American accent altogether—"you will remember how she has become a credit to your liberality, and stands before you a perfect as well as a beautiful lady. And, for such a lady, give me England."

"I have heard you say, Cap'en, that New York or Baltimore beats all creation."

"When I was there, old friend. But, when one is in England, one is bound to confess that English beauty bears the palm. Come now, Stephen, you were disappointed. You hoped that Avis would take the offer

of an old friend and comrade of your own. Well, she can't. Perhaps if she had not been engaged, there would have been a chance. But we are too late. Very good, then. I withdraw, with an apology. Since you cannot think of me, Avis, let me only say that I shall never marry, or think of another woman again."

"Oh, Lord!" cried Stephen.

"Because your image will never be obliterated from my heart." This was very noble and grand. It seemed to do good to all alike. "I had hoped," the Commodore went on, "to have settled down, after this run, to that beautiful life led by the Southern planters, cheered by the affection of an English wife and the devotion of my faithful blacks."

"With a rattan and a cow-hide," Stephen interposed, by way of illustrating the depth of negro affection, and its deeply-rooted nature.

"Since that is not to be, I must give up the thought of it. Meantime, my dear young lady, this has been a painful scene for all concerned. I am sure you will agree with me that it is best forgotten. And if our friend here, whose heart is cast in the truest mould of friendship, has forgotten, in his zeal for me, what is due to a delicately brought up woman, you will, I am sure, forgive him." Stephen stared and gasped. What could be the meaning of this? "You have a perfect right," continued the Captain, "to marry whom you please. It will be better, however, for you to have your—guardian's consent; and if Mr. Davenant, as I doubt not he will, proves to be a moral sort of man, of sound principles, no opposition will be made, and all shall be as you wish."

"Lord!" murmured Stephen, not knowing what to make of this. Never had he seen the Captain so silky, so polite, so considerate.

"My dear," the Captain went on, taking Avis's hand in his, and pressing it in paternal fashion, "I am sure we shall all part friends. Stephen, you used hard words to your ward."

"I did," said Stephen, perceiving that the admission was expected of him.

"Tell her you are sorry."

"I am sorry," said Stephen, obedient to command.

"And that you did not mean them."

"Never meant 'em," he repeated.

"Is it true," asked Avis, "about the raft?"

"That," said Stephen, "is Gospel of St.

Matthew truth. Wropped up you were in four red silk bandanners. Latitude about twenty south, and, as for longitude, why it might have been anywhere north-east of Ceylon. Pity we were in such a hurry, because else we should have searched for papers and letters. Well, I'm sorry I told you, that's a fact."

"And all the stories about my mother being a Knobling——"

"Go on, let me have it," said Stephen.

"And her dying at Jamaica; and my father and the shark; and the cousin who was transported——"

"All lies, my gell; lies and base deceptions, invented to put you off your guard, and not to suspect them bandanners."

"What am I to call myself, then?"

"Well," said Stephen, "since things are smoothed over, I don't greatly mind if you go on bein' Avis Cobbedick. No one needn't know; so you can go on a stickin' out your chin with the same pride in your family as you always have a stuck it out."

The face of her guardian was restored to its usual expression of joviality mingled with cunning; the Captain, seated in a chair, was nursing his chin in his hand, thoughtfully and sadly.

"I will go now, I think," she said. "Mr. Cobbedick, I thank you for your care of me. As I am not your niece at all, I will—I will ask Jack if we cannot somehow pay something of that heavy debt which I owe you. Captain Ramsay, I am deeply grateful for your forbearance."

She held out her hand. He stooped and kissed it.

"Indeed," he said, "I have done nothing. I hope, however, that I may win your trust and, perhaps, your friendship."

As Avis walked slowly away she tried, but in vain, to reconcile the picture drawn by Mr. Cobbedick of his hero, the drunkard and gambler, with the man himself, so mild, so gentle, and so beautifully spoken.

"Cap'en," whispered Stephen hoarsely, "what the blazes does this mean?"

"It means," replied Captain Ramsay, "that there are more ways than one for a man to get what he wants. If it suits me to sing small and pretty—hymn-books is the word."

Stephen shook his head; this was beyond him.

"About this raft business, Steve?"

"All true, Cap. Every word true."

"You are such an almighty liar, as a general rule——"

"Ask anybody in this port of Boscastle, where I was born, whether I had e'er a brother or a sister. A gell can't be a man's niece when that man is a only child. Likewise a orphan."

"She might be your daughter."

"I've not got no daughters. Picked her off of a raft, I did—just as I told her—wropped in four bandanners, with five-and-twenty dead niggers around. In the China seas."

"Then, what in thunder made you bring up the child?"

"I put it this way, Cap'en. I said to myself: 'Here's a child of respectable people, 'cos she's got a nurse all to herself; and the bandanners was the very best. They'll think she's drowned. Wait a bit. When she's four years old, or risin' five, a age when children are pretty, I'll advertise for her parents, and I will take the reward.'"

This, the Captain assured him, was a prudent and far-seeing design. But why had he not carried it out?

"Because," Stephen explained, "I forgot the child. When I was away to North Carolina, in the piloting line, I forgot her altogether; and there she was eatin' her head off, and my money meltin' away without my knowledge. Such wickedness as no one never dreamed of, with the workus not far off; which was meant by heaven, and built by religious people, for Pick-me-ups, and such as are widowless and in affliction, and dependent on their uncles."

This seemed like a faint reminiscence of the Litany, but the allusion was lost on Captain Ramsay who had not yet "found religion."

"Then why did you call her your niece when you came home?"

"I couldn't let on about the raft, bless you. Why, she might ha' claimed the reward herself."

The reward was a fixed idea with him, just as the marriage settlement had become, only the former was the growth of years.

"As it is," he murmured, "I've done wrong in tellin' her. But the temptation was great to take down her pride. There, perhaps she won't think of it, and I can advertise and get the reward all the same."

"Steve," said the Captain, clapping him on the shoulder, "you've got a head after all. The reward is not unlikely to come off. But we must move carefully."

"We?"

"Yes, we. I shall be entitled to all the reward if there is any. But I'm not going to play it low on an old shipmate, and you shall have a fourth of whatever comes."

"What on airth ha' you got to do with it, Cap'en?"

"Only this; that I am going to be the lady's husband, and as such, you see Steve— Ah! you shouldn't let out little secrets. That was always your great fault."

CHAPTER VII. THE CLEVERNESS OF THE COMMODORE

"If that is what you mean," said Stephen blankly, "hang me if I know how you are goin' to do it. First, you tells the girl you are very sorry and you wish you hadn't spoke. Next, you sends your love to her spark. After tellin' her, straight, that you don't want her no more, and you're sorry you spoke, you tell me— Hang me if I know what you mean."

"I did not think you would. Listen now, while I give the sailing orders. You get them in your head tight, and you go on obeying them orders and no others, and then you shall see."

He then proceeded in brief but intelligible terms to dictate those orders. The Pilot nodded his head as they fell one by one from his superior officer's lips. They were easy to learn and to execute, but harder to understand. As his Captain proceeded, however, the good old man's face lit up with surprise, admiration, and delight. For a simpler plan of diabolical villainy was never before unfolded. It was almost too simple. Stephen slapped his leg as the plan unfolded itself, till the echoes were awakened among the rocks and resounded from cliff to cliff like a volley of musketry. These gestures he naturally accompanied with a paeon of congratulation and joy, consisting entirely of those interjections which are not found in grammars, yet are generally sought after by persons who aim at straightforward clearness rather than elegance of language.

"I always said it!" he cried, when the orders had been fully laid down. "I always said it!" He looked at the Captain with the most profound admiration. "Never a man in all the world his equal for devilment and craft! Who'd ha' thought of that, now?"

"Not you, Steve, certainly. Is this better than turning the gal out o' doors,

and driving her into the arms of her chap? I guess, Steve, you don't quite know my sort of stuff yet."

"Better!—ah!" Stephen drew a long breath. "And now, considerin' the high honour to which Avis is goin' to be raised, I'm only sorry I told her anything at all about the raft. She'll only be frettin', when it's all over, that she isn't a Cobbedick after all, just to give her a position more equal to her future rank."

"You think the scheme worth trying, then?"

"It will reel off, Cap'en, like a heavin' of the log. No vi'lence; no quarrellin'; no cryin' and forcin'; and the end of the story most beautiful. I always did like a story to end well. So they lived happy ever afterwards, and had ten sweet children, nine of 'em twins."

The Pilot spent the rest of the day in a kind of exaltation; he felt light of heart; his soul was merry within him. And when Jack Davenant, whom Avis had without delay informed of this new revelation respecting the raft, came for more information, he was received with a hilarity and joyousness which made him suspect strong waters. For once he was wrong. Stephen was perfectly sober and unfeignedly glad and happy.

"You are always welcome, Mr. Davenant," he exclaimed. "Come in and sit down. Never mind the marriage settlements. The Cobbedicks, sir (Avis's mother having been a Knobling, also a most respectable family), can afford to be generous."

"How about the raft story, then?"

"Oh! yes." He was not in the least disconcerted. "The raft, Mr. Davenant, is the truth. But I've always been accustomed to consider that dear gell as my niece, so that the family, as it were, growed. I shall be sorry to lose the Knoblings, too, for they're a good stock to know and to talk about."

"Then she is not your niece at all?"

"Not at all, which brings my generous conduct out in a more beautiful light."

"Well, I'm glad of that anyhow. Now tell me the story of the raft over again."

"We picked up the raft in the Gulf of Mexico about two days' run to the west of Cuba, whither we were bound." Jack remarked that this statement contradicted the previous one as to the position of the raft. "No one was aboard that raft except the dead ayah and the child."

Here again another alteration. "We took the child aboard without waiting to search for proofs of who she might be, and we sailed away." Another, but a trifling variation in the story.

"Ah! what was your cargo? Could it not wait while you had the common curiosity to find out, if possible, who the child might be?"

"My cargoes, in those days, young gentleman, was the kind that spile a good deal by keepin', particularly if there's any part of it gone off a bit, so to say, when it comes aboard. Some o' mine, that trip, had already begun to spile."

"Oranges, fruit, lemons?"

"No, sir, not fruit. A kind of cargo it was which certain piratical cruisers pretendin' to be British were fond of scoopin' up for theirselves. Lord! the losses I've seen in that kind of cargo; a whole shipload I've seen tossed overboard before now to save the skipper and his ship. And the sharks as busy as snappin'-turtles round that ship."

"Do you mean—" Jack stopped because he was afraid, in a sense, to say the word.

"I mean niggers. Three hundred niggers I had aboard that ship, spiling' fast for want of breathin' room, fresh air, fresh water, and fresh provisions. Three hundred and sixty-five, as many as the days in the year, I landed on the hospitable shore of Cuba. But the number that spiled on the way you would hardly believe, sir. Well, the little maid was very soon aboard, and a comfortable negress had her in a jiffy, and there we were."

"I wonder if this man can tell the truth," said Jack.

"Where she came from, who she was, I don't know no more than you. As for her name, I give it to her, like I give her everything she owns, with a noble education and no expense. Whereas, for marriage settlements—"

"Your nobility is well known and acknowledged, Mr. Cobbedick. Also your command of temper when Avis does not act as you would wish."

"She's been complainin', has she? Well, Mr. Davenant, there's no call for you to find fault. Wait till you're married and found her out. As for that, too—" He remembered the sailing orders, and stopped himself after one broad grin, which indeed he could not repress. "As for that, I own I did quietly whisper, as it were, when

she told me about your offer, that my wishes lay other ways and I'd rather see her take up with a sailor. I pointed out her dooty to her, kind, and clear, and plain. If she won't do that dooty, I can't help it, can I?"

"But you point out duty with too many—well, too strongly."

"Sailors must be swore to; what's good afloat is good ashore. No sailors in the world so smart as our'n. The reason why is that they're properly swore to both young and old. That done Avis no harm. As for you, Mr. Davenant, why, if she will have you, and you're still for your fancy, we must make the best of a bad bargain."

Jack laughed.

"Not such a very bad bargain, I hope," he said. "Well, Mr. Cobbedick, I shall do my best to make Avis as happy as she deserves."

"I did my best, too," grumbled her guardian. "And what's come of it? She won't even take the man I want her to marry. If I'd asked her for any big thing now, it would have been different—I'm too old to expect much gratitude; but for such a trifle as that—just to tell her other young man that she can't keep company with him no longer because a better feller has put into port—theer! it's enough to make a British sailor never do a honourable and generous thing no more. Better, a'most, have left her on the raft."

Jack laughed again.

"Why, surely you can't blame a girl for taking the man of her own heart?"

"Gells must do as they're told. They've got no business to have no heart."

"Well, she is not your niece, by your own showing, so I suppose she can do as she likes. Now I want to marry her as soon as I possibly can. Meantime you will, I suppose, allow her to remain here; of course I will pay for her board."

Here the Pilot began a series of winks, nods, and pantomimic gestures indicative of caution; he looked out of the window and closed it carefully; he opened the door, and looked about to see if there were any listeners. Finally, he sat down again, and whispered hoarsely:

"You'll have to take her soon, young gentleman. The sooner the better. The Commodore, who's not a man to lose his time, has come here to— What do you think he's here for?"

"I don't know."

"To ship me as one of his officers.

Nothing less. For he's got a ship and we're off in a fortnight. Says the Cap'en : 'Give me old Steve. He's sixty, but he's tough. Give me Steve at any price.'"

"Where are you going?" Jack knew very well, but it seemed polite to ask.

"Where we air a-going is a secret. Likewise the ship and all. It's a state secret, and they would stop her in port if they guessed that a Secesh officer was her captain."

"Is she another Alabama, then?"

"Maybe; maybe." Stephen wagged his head mysteriously. "Never mind that. Keep the secret, young man, or I'm hanged if you shall get the girl after all. The question for you is: Can you take her just as she is, in a fortnight's time?"

"I can take her to-day, if you like."

"Very good. Next question: When you've got her, I suppose you are able to keep her?"

"I am a painter. I hope to be able to keep her."

"A painter!" Stephen took him for something superior in the house-painting line, and spoke with the greatest contempt. "A painter! To think that gell has throwed away a sailor, and such a sailor as the Commodore, for a painter."

"Yet even a painter may make money," said the unfortunate artist.

"Well, well. And where does your trade lie? Where is your shop? Air you a journeyman or air you a master?"

"I work in London where my shop is, and, as I am paid by the job, I suppose I am only a journeyman."

"Here's a downfall!" Stephen spread his hands in dismay. "Yesterday the gell was a Cobbedick, her mother was a Knobling, and she might ha' married Captain Ramsay himself. To-day she is a Common Pick-me-up, with never a name to her back, and she's goin' to marry a journeyman painter, paid by the job. Ah! pride, pride, which cometh before a squall."

"A fortnight," Jack reflected. "To-day is Monday. If I go to town to-morrow I can manage something. We can go into lodgings for a while. I could get back on Saturday and we might be married on Monday. That will do. You may give away the bride, if you like."

"As there's no marriage settlements," said Stephen, shaking his head, and thinking that he could not sell her as he had proposed, "I s'pose I must give her away. But she ought to fetch a thousand

pounds at least. Make it five hundred, Mr. Davenant, and pay up before you start," here he could not repress another smile, which broadened to a grin, "and we will call it square."

"Old Stephen, dear Avis," said Jack, presently recounting his interview, "is not, I suppose, your uncle, though I confess to doubts about the raft story. When a man cannot give the details twice in the same afternoon without varying them in every particular, I should say that the story would not be taken as evidence."

"I must be someone's daughter, Jack."

"You probably came straight down from heaven, my darling."

I always set down on paper as few of the raptures of lovers as is consistent with conveying a clear impression that there were raptures. It will be seen from this specimen what nonsense Jack was capable of talking, and how very much he was in love.

"First," said Avis, "I used to be ashamed of having no relations except an unknown uncle in America. Next, I began to think it a distinction. The other girls had fathers and mothers; one's father was a doctor, and another a farmer, and another a lawyer, and so on; they had received their stations in the nursery. Mine was all to come. Perhaps, I thought, it might never come. I was to be a princess; the long lost heiress of a great estate; I was to be a heroine of romance. They were all silly about me, and I suppose I was silly about myself. Then there did come as it seemed the telling of the riddle. It was a lame ending, and I was a poor weak creature to make myself unhappy over my fate. Yet it seemed dreadful to be told to go and work; to be a lady's maid, or a barmaid. And, though he had been generous to me, I could not feel that Stephen was quite what one would look for in a guardian and a father's brother."

"The Knobling connection was certainly one to be forgotten," said Jack. "Poor Avis! her mother's brother—a most distinguished man—was transported for twenty years for forging the port admiral's signature. Mr. Cobbedick has got great powers, my dear."

"But now, although it is a relief—yes, Jack, a great relief to know that this unpleasant old man is not my uncle, remember that I have no name. Cobbedick is not pretty, but one gets used to it."

"I thought it very pretty till this afternoon," said Jack; "now I know what an ugly name it is. You shall change it, my darling, for Davenant this day week."

"Oh! Jack, not so soon; give me time."

"Not a day longer, my dear. I feel as if I had been too long without you—years too long; we ought to have been together ever since you were born."

Then they planned their future lives. Other married couples have troubles; this pair resolved upon having none; their path stretched before them bathed in sunshine, here and there shaded by rows of the most beautiful trees; all the road was strewn with flowers; there seemed no end of sunny days and warmth and happiness and love. It is also a part of Solomon's wondrous way of man and a maid, that this dream of the perfect life should come once, and for ever be remembered. The clouds hide the sun, and the pathway grows painful as the years run on. Well if the love remain, because the dream of youth has become, at the end, to be the recollection of a life.

Be sure that Avis told her lover of the surprising and extraordinary behaviour of Captain Ramsay, who had shown a chivalrous courtesy worthy of the chivalrous South. She also told, and it was ascribed to the vivid imagination of the old man, how Stephen had painted this true-bred gentleman in the blackest colours. Jack, for his part, made severe animadversions on the blindness of people who practise the trade of poet. "He called him a tiger," said Jack indignantly.

That evening he sought an opportunity of speaking to Captain Ramsay in the usual place of resort.

"I have to thank you, sir," he said, "for your great courtesy and forbearance in the matter of a certain young lady."

"Say no more, Mr. Davenant," said the Captain. "A man must be a mean skunk to force himself on a young lady when she's already promised. I beg your pardon, sir, most sincerely, for intruding to the extent I did. Had I known earlier, I should not have done so. Shake hands, sir, and take a whisky cocktail made in Baltimore style. I've taught them how to do it."

Friendly relations thus established, Captain Ramsay, still speaking in a slow gentle way, and with thought, as if he was carefully looking for the right word and no

other, to express his opinion, went on to assure Jack that he lamented very profoundly his late arrival on the field; that he was one of those who believe in the goodness of woman and the perfectibility of human nature by the shining example of that goodness; that he was certain from observation and experience of good women, among whom, he said, his lot when ashore had been chiefly cast, that Avis was as good as she was beautiful. These and many other beautiful and comforting things he said. And then, when the heart of Jack was really warming to him, as to a man who had seen many men and their manners, and yet preserved a certain virginal purity of thought which made him blush for himself, the Captain called for another cocktail.

It was irritating to observe the scowl with which the Poet, who was present, sat on his side of the settle and listened to this conversation.

From sentiments, the Captain passed to the narration of deeds. These had no bearing, it is true, on the ennobling nature of love, but they brought out his character in vivid light as a practiser of a code which, though not English, yet seemed in some respects justifiable.

"And really," Jack subsequently confessed, "it was not till afterwards that I found out that he had been simply confessing himself a murderer."

"In the Southern States," he said, "men become brothers. If you will be brothers with me, Mr. Davenant, I guess it may be good, some day, for one of us. For when two men air brothers, they air bound to fight for each other, to spring a bowie or a six-shooter for each other at a moment's notice; not to desert each other. I had a brother once down in Texas. Now, he was murdered. Wal, gentlemen, every time I land in Galveston, which happens once in two years or thereabouts, I go for those murderers with a rifle, a knife, and a pair of revolvers. I do not say that I land one at every visit, for there were ten, but now, as near as I can count, there are only three, and one is skeered and gone up country, where I doubt I shall never find him. The other two air fighting the battles of the Lord in Dixie's Land: wherefore, for the present, they know that they air safe. Once the war is over and the Yank (as he will be) chawed up so that his own mother won't know him again, I shall make for those murderers again, even if they haven't got a leg nor an arm left."

Because I am bound to remember my brother. And so, Mr. Davenant, if you please, we will be brothers. I envy you your wife, that's a fact. And I shall go in mourning for being too late for that beautiful young thing all the days of my life. But you've won her. Wherefore, here is my hand, fair and honest, and brothers we shall be."

Who could resist such an appeal to the deeper feelings of the heart? Not Jack, who mutely held out his hand and grasped the hand of the American. As he did so he thought he heard the Poet murmuring softly:

"He is a tiger—a man-eater!"

"Steve Cobbedick tells me," the Captain went on, "that you are going to London to-morrow?"

"Yes, for a few days only. I have," said Jack, with an expressive blush, "a few preparations to make."

"Nat'rally. And you come back—when?"

"On Saturday. To be married on Monday."

Just then a telegram was brought to the Captain. He opened it, read it, threw the paper into the fire, and stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"You come back on Saturday. Good. Do not be later, because we, Steve Cobbedick and I, have very important business to look after about then. It would be a pity if you were to come after we were gone."

"Yes," said Jack; "I should like to see you off."

"A great pity it would be," said Captain Ramsay. "Ah! Mr. Davenant, if you were not going to be married, what a time you might have with us! What a time!"

"Are you not satisfied with one Alabama?"

"No; nor with a hundred, provided we drive the Yanks off the seas; and provided, if there be a row, that England pays. You would enjoy yourself very much with us, Mr. Davenant, I assure you, particularly"—he added this with a frank winning smile—"if you knew who was going to be aboard with us. You'll remember the words, won't you, now? I say you'd be uncommon happy with us, particularly if you knew, beforehand, who was going to be a passenger aboard."

Jack laughed. "I will remember," he said.

"A tiger," murmured the Poet, the irreconcilable.

In the morning, with fond farewells, Jack took leave of his fiancée.

"It is only for a week," he said, while she clung to him and wept. "Only for a week, my Avis. I go to make my darling a nest."

"I cannot bear to let you go, Jack. Oh! it is all like a dream to me. I came here in a dream of hope. It changed to a dream of gloom and despair; then came another dream—of you, my lover; and I have lost my name and the people whom I thought to have found. Now you are going away. How do I know that I shall not to-morrow awake and find that you, too, are a dream?"

He took off his ring, a simple seal, his watch and his chain. "Keep them," he said, "for me. Wear the watch and chain. Hang the ring upon the chain, and when you look at them, think I am no ghost or phantom of a troubled brain, because no ghost who ever walked was able to carry a watch and chain."

"Yet," she said—"Yet I cannot bear to let you go. A week; a whole week. And what may happen, meantime?"

"What should happen, dearest? You are surrounded by friends. The Poet stays here to keep watch over you. Captain Ramsay will suffer no wrong or harm to be done you. Courage, dear."

"I am foolish," she said. "Yet it is so hard to let you go, even for a week. I am not afraid of Stephen, nor of anything that I can tell you. Yet, Jack, I am afraid."

He kissed her again and again; he assured her that there was nothing in the world to fear; he promised to write every day; he pictured his speedy return—why, if he came back on Saturday, it would only be for a five days' absence; he made her blush by bidding her think of the next Monday—Saint Monday—day ever to be blessed and held most holy—when he should stand beside her at the altar. And so, at last, because time must be obeyed, he caught her in his arms and kissed a last farewell.

Alas! that kiss was the last of Jack that the girl would have to remember for many a weary day.

It was on Tuesday, then, that Jack Davenant left Boscastle, driving to Launceston to catch the train. He begged the

Poet, before he went away, to keep Avis under his special charge, while he was away; to amuse her, guard her, and see that no harm happened to her; a charge which the Poet accepted with great zeal and friendliness. There was then nothing to fear: Captain Ramsay was entirely to be trusted, a little rough in his expressions, but a man of greatly noble mind; Stephen, who certainly had been violent before, would not venture to break out again: everything was settled and comfortable. Yet, in spite of assurances, repeated again and again to himself, he departed for London unaccountably anxious. Perhaps Avis's terrors infected him. He felt the sudden chill which comes before a storm. The power of prophesy for some wonderful reason means the power of predicting the approach of unpleasantness. Cassandra, Jeremiah, and Mr. Grey utter their prophecies, but they are never of a cheerful nature. Ascalon is to be made desolate; Troy is to be destroyed; Tyre is to be a rock for the spreading of nets; England is to be levelled with Holland; and so on. Never anything to make us contemplate the future with satisfaction. Not only Ahab and his grandsons, but also all mankind, have found the prophets profoundly melancholy. Why have there been no joyous foretellers, jovialseers, cheerful upraisers of man's heart by painting a future in which there shall be no injustice, no hard times, and peace, prosperity, and contentment for all alike? There must be some good times coming. Sad as the history of man has been, there has certainly been a considerable improvement in cheerfulness, which we hope may continue. And when I go into the prophetic line it will be to proclaim, in the immediate future, the most delightful time imaginable, to prepare for which we shall hang or imprison all kings, commanders of armies, inventors of arms, troublers of the peace, promoters of discontent, professional agitators, and disagreeable people. The present days, indeed, have become so eminently uncomfortable that it is almost time to begin making this announcement.

The Poet mounted guard with zeal. He was suspicious of the old man, whose sudden change of front was inexplicable; he was suspicious of the gentleness assumed by the American; such suavity was unnatural in a person of his calling and his self-confessed antecedents. Yet what harm could they do?

It seemed on the first day of Jack's

absence as if Captain Ramsay, in his zeal for his "brother," was also mounting guard for the protection of the girl against unknown dangers. For he followed her about and left the Poet few opportunities of talking to her alone. Now he so thoroughly disliked the American that he could not bear even his presence. On the second day, however, he got her to walk with him on the cliffs, and of course they talked of Jack all the time.

"Stephen," she said, "seems to have forgotten his disappointment. I suppose it is because Captain Ramsay has behaved with so much consideration. I hope, at least, that you have repented of your bad opinion of him?"

"Not at all. I have a worse opinion of him than ever."

"But that is surely prejudice. Remember how generous he has been."

"I know. That is, I know what you mean. What I cannot understand is—why he puts on this new air of virtue; I don't understand."

"But you may be wrong."

"Yes," said the Poet. "I thought when I saw him first that he looked and talked like a tiger. All the same, he may be a lamb."

"To-day is Wednesday," Avis went on, "and Jack will be with us again on Saturday. I had a letter to-day. It is the second letter, only the second letter that I have ever had in all my life. The first was a dreadful letter from my—from Stephen, telling me to leave school and go to him. But the second—Oh! how do men learn to say such beautiful things?"

"Because they feel them, perhaps."

"Let us sit down," said Avis, sighing, "and you shall tell me all about Jack, and what he was like when he was a boy. I am sure you will have nothing but what is good to tell me."

This was on the Wednesday morning. The reason why Avis was left to the Poet by Captain Ramsay was that he was having a serious conversation with Stephen. The Maryland, he told him, had already left Liverpool; she would arrive off Boscastle Port about noon the next day. Therefore, it behoved Stephen to make such arrangements as might be necessary for immediate departure. Ramsay gave him, in fulfilment of the agreement, the sum of three hundred and seventy-five pounds in Bank of England notes, half his pay as pilot from Nassau to Wilmington and back, with a written

agreement for the other half on the completion of the round trip; and then they laid their heads together and whispered, though no one was within ear-shot, for a good half-hour. When two men whisper together it is generally safe to consider that they mean mischief to some person or persons. When these two men are old slavers, filibusters, blockade-runners, and the like, it is quite safe to consider that they mean mischief.

"Then, I think," said the Captain at last, "that we have made all square and right. There can't be any difficulty. The weather looks as if it will be fine. Mate, this little job shall be pulled off in a way to do us credit. As for me, I shall give all the credit to you. Stephen, I shall say, devised the plan. Stephen carried it through. Stephen did it all."

The old man grinned with pleasure and pride. Then he thought of some disagreeable side of the business, and he became serious and even troubled.

"She'll take on awful, she will," he said.

"Let her take on. That won't matter."

"She's a plucky one, too. Cap'en, I don't half like it."

"Steve, old man, you don't feel like going back upon your word, do you? Don't say that."

Stephen Cobblewick took courage.

"My word is passed," he replied stoutly, "and shall be kep'. A sailor mustn't go back upon his word. Though, when you come to turn it over in your mind, so as to look at it all round, it does seem kind of unnat'ral for a man to kidnap his own niece."

"If she's your own niece, how about the raft?"

"Why, that's true. Seeing, then, that she isn't my niece at all——"

"And that we air old shipmates and pals——"

"And that you're goin' to behave honourable, and treat her kind——"

"And marry her in the first port, and settle down afterwards where's there no chance of nasty enquiries——"

"And keep her out of the way of that other one—Olive?"

"Ay! She shall never hear of Olive at all."

"And to pro—vide the gell with all she wants——"

"And stick on to her faithful and true——"

"Why," answered Stephen, "I'm doin'

the best I can, and everybody will own it, for the gell; and I'll do it with a thankful heart."

"Spoke like a man!" cried the Captain.

"Spoke like what I expected from old Steve!"

Stephen had business that afternoon which took him to Camelot. His business was to arrange for the collection of his rents and the safety of his money while he was away. As for his kit, which was not extensive, he packed it in a water-proof bag, and stowed it in the locker of his boat. A busy and eventful day it was for him. In fact, it was more full of fate than he at all anticipated.

While he was thus occupied Captain Ramsay spent his time with Avis.

"I come to tell you," he began, "that I have received a telegram." He handed it to her.

"The Maryland went out of dock this morning. She will lie-to off Boscastle Port about noon to-morrow. If the weather is bad she will put in at Falmouth."

"The weather," he said, "promises fine. It is a pity that she does not go to Falmouth, or you might have run down with Stephen and me and gone aboard her."

"I have never seen a ship," Avis said. "Except the coasters which put in here."

"Poor child!" said the Captain, with feeling. "She has never seen a ship!"

"And Stephen, does he sail with you to-morrow?"

"No; he joins us later on; we are going for a trial cruise first." The lies dropped out of this mariner's mouth as easily as out of Stephen's. "He comes aboard later on; three weeks or a month."

"I hope, Captain Ramsay," said Avis, "that you are not going to run into any terrible danger."

"You feel as if you would be sorry if I was knocked on the head with a Yankee cutlass."

"I should be very sorry, for, indeed, Captain Ramsay, I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for your consideration."

"If I had known," he said, "that your affections were already bestowed, I should not have presumed to step in. As for Stephen's bad temper, that was all the fault of my confounded bungling. In the States a man speaks first to the gal, or she sometimes to him; which is, I guess,

whether it's he first or she first, the right and natural way. I thought, bein' a stranger here, that a man was bound to go to a gal's parents and guardian first, and, if they didn't seem to yearn for him, hitch off and try with another batch of parents."

"If I knew how to thank you—" Avis began.

"Then," he replied, with a gush of good feeling, "do not thank me at all. As to that story about the raft—"

"Do you really think it is true? You know how Stephen exaggerates."

"I know. A beautiful liar he is. But I think the raft story is true. Pity it was so long ago. I wonder if there was any name or mark on your clothes, or those silk handkerchiefs with which you were wrapped up?"

"I do not know, indeed. I know only what my—what Stephen told me."

"If there was any thing, and that thing was kept, I suppose it would be in the house and in Stephen's own room?"

"I suppose so," said Avis.

"It would be kind of romantic, wouldn't it," he asked, "if we were to find your parents after all? There must be somewhere in the world, some folk who had a little baby lost aboard a ship coming from India eighteen years ago or so."

"I think," said Avis, "that I do not want to find any more relations. The first discovery was not encouraging. I am content to remain what Stephen feelingly called me, a Common Pick-me-up. Besides, I shall have Jack."

Notwithstanding, the Captain took an opportunity of examining Stephen again upon the point. But there was nothing to go upon. The bandannas were gone, expended in service, and there was nothing else, not even the bit of coral which the lost heiress always keeps treasured up, tied by a ribbon round her neck, and hidden in her bosom, where it must scratch horribly and be about as comfortable as a hair-shirt. Also, when Stephen was required to relate the whole story afresh, he told it with an entirely new set of circumstances, and placed the raft a thousand miles or so south of the Cape, nearly in the regions of perpetual ice. Charged with this variation, he admitted that he had been careless as to details, but swore stoutly that the child had been veritably picked up at sea, the last survivor.

With Avis, however, the Captain changed

the conversation, and began to narrate his adventures and perils by sea and land, especially those which brought into strong light his own generosity and many other noble gifts. And presently he told the girl of a certain enchanted castle, grange, or palace, which he had built for the solace of his soul in sunny Florida.

"I guess that when this war is over, which will be before many months, I shall return to that sweet location and stay there till the time comes for sending in the checks. There's forests of palms and tree ferns, eighty feet high, round the house; there's miles of orange trees; the pigs and the niggers are fed on nothing else but oranges; the alligators come ashore after them; they sit under the trees, and get their manners and their hides softened by eating that yaller civiliser. It never freezes there and never blows; it is never too hot; there's banks of flowers, most all of them magnolias, with creepers climbing everywhere; there's pretty parrots and little humming-birds; there's plenty of niggers; you can lie in a silk hammock under the verandah, with one nigger told off for the fan, another to swing you, another to peel the oranges, another to bring cooling drinks, another to roll your cigarette, and another to light them. Avis, it's a life that you poor people living in a blessed island where there's mostly rain, and when it doesn't rain, it blows east wind, wouldn't understand at first. You'd say 'Lemme be. Gimme more iced cocktail. I don't want no better heaven; this is a small bit of the happy land chopped off and put down in the Gulf of Mexico, just to let an unbelieving world know what they may expect if they play the game right through honourable. Some day, perhaps,' he continued, 'you will cross over the water and see my little plantation. You and your husband, I mean.'

With such discussion the crafty Captain strengthened and increased the girl's confidence in him, so that she thought she had a friend indeed in this rough yet gentle-spoken sailor. And while the Poet watched with a disquiet which he could not explain, the Captain and Avis sat all the afternoon together. When he left her he held out his hand.

"We shall say good-bye to-morrow," he said. "This is for you to say that you trust me now."

"Why," said Avis, laughing, "of course I trust you. And so does Jack."

"The other fellow doesn't," said the

Captain, "but never mind him. As for Jack, he ought to have been a sailor."

Avis laughed again. "All good men cannot be sailors."

"Jack ought to have been one," he repeated. "Ours is the trade for truth and honour; also, for fair and open play."

Now about eleven o'clock in the forenoon of Thursday, the Poet was sitting on the rocks facing the sea. Avis was for the moment forgotten; his note-book was in one hand and a pencil in the other. He was quite happy, because after many days' wrestling he was finding freedom of expression. He had just made up his mind as to the metre fittest for his subject, which dealt with a seaside maiden and her lover; and was suggested, in fact, by Avis herself. He had already planned the story. It had a tragic conclusion, for he was young; when one gets on in life, one has seen so many tragedies, so many disappointments, so many crushed hopes, so many early deaths, that one feels it to be really sinful to add another drop to this ocean of tears. Poetry, like fiction, should be glad. But the Poet's story was a sad one: the seaside maiden was to be torn away from her lover by wicked pirates; he was to wander from land to land in search of her. He was to find her at last, but only to find her dying. The situation was so affecting that he was already beginning to shed tears over it.

Now while he pondered and made notes, he became aware of a steamer standing in, apparently for Boscastle, whither no steamers ever came. She hove to, however, a few hundred yards from the rocks, the sea being nearly calm and the day being fair, and presently her whistle sounded sharp and clear. It was a signal.

She was so close that everything on board was easy to be made out. A small craft, but long and narrow, like a cigar, she lay low as if she was well loaded, her hull showing only about nine feet above the water; she was painted a dull grey colour; she carried no other rigging than a pair of lower masts without any yards; she was probably a boat of about five hundred tons burden. She looked from the height, where the Poet was sitting, like a toy steamer, too fragile and delicate to stand the great waves of the rolling forties.

Then a very singular thing happened. Just below the Poet's feet was the mouth of the

little harbour; there came out, sailing slowly in the light breeze, Stephen Cobbedick's boat. He himself sat midships, handy for the sail; Avis held the rudder-lines; beside her sat Captain Ramsay. It was obvious that the steamer was in some way connected with the American; then the Poet saw that the sailors on board the steamer were running about, and presently a companion was lowered. It must be Captain Ramsay's ship. Then he was going away; that was a good thing; Avis and Stephen were taking him off; that was a friendly thing to do. The little boat ran alongside the steamer; Stephen hauled in sail, while the Captain made the painter fast to the ladder. Then he assisted Avis to climb the steep and narrow ladder, and sprang up himself. Arrived on deck, the girl walked for'ard, looking about her with curiosity and interest. She was invited to see the ship, that was plain. What on earth, then, did old Stephen mean? Here, indeed, his behaviour became inexplicable. For, with so much deliberation as to show premeditation and intention, he carefully untied the painter, stepped out upon the ladder, and climbed up; as for the boat, she drifted slowly astern. Then the steamer, without more delay, suddenly and swiftly forged ahead; the boat was in a moment far away. The Poet saw, as the ship glided over the smooth water, Avis rushing to the side and the Captain clutching at her arm. He sprang to his feet and shouted and waved his arms. Avis saw him, and he saw her struggling, while Ramsay and Stephen held her back, as if she would spring overboard in a mad attempt to escape. Then he saw her free herself from her captors and sink, despairing, on the deck. But the ship went on her course; the figures became more difficult to see; soon there was but a black hull; then but a line of smoke; then that vanished; all was out of sight.

Avis was gone! She was enticed on board the ship by the crafty American and the villain Stephen: it was no accident; she was treacherously and foully deceived; the thing was deliberately done: he had seen with his own eyes the old Pilot untie the painter and set his boat adrift; she was in the power of as black a villain as ever walked. "I always said," cried the Poet, "that he was a tiger!"

In the worst misfortune it is always a consolation to know that you have been right in your prognostications. In fact, some of your friends have always pro-

pheſied it. I have ſaid above that no man is a prophet of joy, ſo that on the rare occasions when joyful things do come the happiness they cauſe is never diminished by the voice of one who ſays he always told you ſo.

"I knew," repeated the prophet, "that he was a man-eater, a tiger!"

He haſtened down the rocks and told the sailors and people about the port what he had ſeen. They could not help; they knew nothing; that Stephen ſhould go aboard with his friend was natural; that he ſhould caſt his boat adrift was incredibile. It muſt haue been an accident. They manned a boat and put off, expeſting to meet the steamer coming back. The Poet went with them; outside, they picked up the little yacht, a derelict; but the steamer did not return, and preſently they came back wondering. And in the Wellington Arms that night, when the little club met and realiſed the vacançy caused by Stephen's absence, they began slowly to perceive that a great crime had been committed.

All that night—the nights in June are light—the Poet wandered about the rocks on the chance that Avis might yet ſomehow be brought back. He had betrayed his charge, he ſaid to himſelf. He ought nev'er to haue left her while that man was in the place. He ought—And what would Jack ſay—poor Jack, who had lost his bride? With what face would the Poet meet him and greet him with the dreadful news?

CHAPTER VIII. THE WRECK OF THE MARYLAND.

I HAVE now to tell a ſtory of the moſt wicked treachery and deceit that was ever practiſed upon any girl. There never, ſurely, could haue been a greater villain than Captain Ramsay, or a more ready accomplice than Stephen Cobbedick.

They lulled me, between them, into ſo great a confidence, that I believed the man Ramsay to be my firm and moſt truſtworthy friend. He ſaid Jack and he were ſworn brothers; that to be brothers among the people with whom he had moſtly lived, meant to ſtand by and defend each other, to make each ready to die, if neceſſary, for the other. With ſuch an affection did he pretend to regard Jack; ſuch mutual vows, he ſaid, had they interchanged. He was full of protestations about honour, loyalty—playing a fair and open game. All this time the plot was laid, and the plan resolved

upon, although it was not until the laſt moment, and then only by a preteſe at a ſudden thought, that I was enticed on board his ſhip.

It was on the Thursday—Jack having been gone two days—and early in the forenoon, that the man Ramsay came, walking ſlowly, to the cottage where I was writing a letter to Jack. He had ſtuck one of his big cigars between his lips, and in his hand, I remember, was a wild rose, which gave him ſomehow the look of a man of peace. But he had put off his black clothes, and wore a smart ſeamanlike dress, with a gold band round his peaked cap.

"The craft is off the mouth of the port, Miss Avis," he ſaid ſadly and gently. "I hope you will run down and give me a farewell wave of your handkerchief from the point, when I am on board. Where is Stephen?"

"Here I am, Cap'en," ſaid the old man, coming out of the kitchen. Now there was nothing, not the leaſt ſign, to ſhow that he, too, was on the point of sailing. He was dressed as uſual. He had made, ſo far as I could ſee, no preparations. To be ſure, I was not ſuspecting any. "Is the gig ſent ashore?"

"No, Stephen. You ſhall take me off yourſelf in your own boat."

I thought that friendly of him.

"I will, Cap'en; I will," replied Stephen cheerily. "It's the laſt thing I can do before I jine next month."

He ſaid those words, I ſuppoſe, to put me off any ſuspicion. But, indeed, I had none.

"Then, Miss Avis"—the Captain held out his hand—"I will ſay farewell here. You will promise to ſtand on the point and ſee the laſt of me?"

"Why ſhould ſhe go to the point at all?" Stephen ſuggested. "Why can't ſhe come off in the boat, as uſual?"

"Why not?" asked the Captain, his kind thoughtful face lighting up with a ſmile. "A happy thought, old friend! Will you do me ſo much honour as to ſteer me on board my own ſhip?"

I was pleased to be of a little ſervice, and we all walked away to the quay, where the boat was lying ready for the trip.

When we reached the ſhip, Captain Ramsay asked me if, as I was there, I would like just to run up the companion and ſee what an ocean steamer was like.

"Let us make the painter fast first," he ſaid.

He gave me his hand up the steps, Stephen remaining behind.

I began to look about me curiously, when suddenly I heard the engines begin to work, and felt the screw revolve. The ship was moving.

"Oh, Captain," I said, laughing, "you must stop her quick, for me to get out."

"Ay, ay," he replied, but said no more, and still the screw went on.

"Captain!" I cried. Then I ran to the side. There was our boat drifting away far astern, and beside me stood Stephen himself, a waterproof bag in his hand, looking so guiltily ashamed that I guessed at once the truth. The boat had been sent adrift on purpose. I was a prisoner on board the ship.

If Stephen looked ashamed, not so the Captain. He drew himself straight, with a glitter in his eye, and a smile upon his lips. It was a cruel glitter, and a hard smile.

The man's face had changed; the thoughtfully sad expression was gone.

"This little plan, Miss Avis," he said quietly, "was arranged between me and Stephen. We were anxious that it should come off without any hitch, which was the reason why you were not in the secret. You are our passenger."

"Oh! villain!" It was not to the Captain, but to Stephen, that I spoke.

He made no reply. He hung his head, and looked at the Captain, as if for help. He spoke up, roughly and readily.

"You did it for the best, Steve. No kind o' use to be skeered because the girl's riled. She's nat'rally riled; anybody would be, first go off. What you've got to think is, that you done it for the best. Why, at this very moment, come to listen, you'll hear your conscience singing hymns in your bosom with grateful joy."

"All for your own good, Avis," said Stephen, with an effort.

"That is so. Meantime, Miss Avis, if you feel like letting on, why, let yourself rip; we don't mind."

"Not a bit," said Stephen hoarsely. "I never heerd a woman let on out at sea before."

I suppose I was still silent, for presently the Captain went on:

"I told you that I was in love with you. I am a man, and not a maid; so that, when I set my fancy on a thing, that thing I must have. I set my fancy on you, and no other. I am powerful in love with you. I am

so much in love that, rather'n lose you, I'd sink this craft with all her cargo, and the crew, and you too. I would, by —"

He strengthened the assurance with so great an oath, that it ought alone to have sunk the ship by the violence of its wickedness.

"Let's have no sinkin' of crafts," said Stephen uneasily. "Avis will come round bime-by. Give her rope."

"As for your lover," the Captain went on, "he counts for nothing. You'll forget him in a week. Make up your mind to forget him at once, for you've got to marry me. That's settled. I stand no sulks from any gal. They've got to look cheerful, and to do what they're told to do. Then things go well, and they find me a good sort."

He spoke as if he had a dozen wives.

Now, I know not what I answered, because, indeed, my mind was confused. I think I prayed them, of their mercy, to set me ashore. I think I recalled to the Captain's memory the many things he had said in truth and honour; that I threatened them, and set them at defiance. All I remember quite clearly is that Stephen stood stupidly staring as if afraid and ashamed, that the Captain quietly stood before me, making no answer to speak of, and that when I appealed to the man at the helm, he kept one eye on the wheel, and the other on the compass, and made no response whatever. I wonder how far his immobility would extend. I believe, however, that if they had thrown me overboard he would have taken no notice, either by word or gesture. He was a Norfolk man (the American Norfolk)—a long-boned weedy man—who afterwards was of great service to me. His face was as red as exposure to the weather could make it, and its expression meant duty. His name was Liberty Wicks.

When I was worn out with appealing to consciences as hard as the nether mill-stone, I fell to tears and weeping. There was not one among all the crew who could be moved by the tears of a woman. Yet they all knew what their captain had done.

"There is not," said the Captain, "one single man aboard this ship who will help you. Therefore, you may spare your cries. And now, if you please, as there's the ship to navigate and the work to be done, p'raps you'll let me show you your cabin."

"Don't frighten her, Cap'en," said Stephen, looking uneasy again. "Tell her what you've promised : else you may find another pilot."

"Your cabin is your own," Captain Ramsay explained. "It is your private room. No one will disturb you there except your steward. I am sorry there is no stewardess. When you please, come on deck. There we shall all be your servants, and I am sure," he added, with a return to the old manner, "that we shall, in a day or two, see you happier on board the Maryland than you could ever have been in any other land."

He led the way, and I followed without a word. Stephen came after, still crest-fallen, though, by the wagging of his head and the clearing of his throat, it was apparent that he was making up his mind to listen to those hymns which, according to the Captain, his conscience was singing. The efforts made by a man who is thoroughly ashamed of himself to recover self-respect and seem at ease, are very sad to witness.

The steamer had a pretty little saloon aft, with a sleeping cabin on either side.

"These," said Captain Ramsay, still in the same conciliatory but determined manner, "are your quarters. I give you up the captain's cabin. Here you will be quite private and undisturbed. You need have no fears. If any one aboard this ship were to offer an insult to my future wife, that man's remains should be thrown overboard shortly afterwards. Therefore, be under no apprehension. You shall mess by yourself."

I sat down without a word. Oh ! Jack ! Jack ! Who would tell you ?

"The Captain means kind," said Stephen hoarsely. "Come, Avis, be comfortable. A run across the herring' pond, and a husband on the other side of it. Such a husband, too ! Why, it's honour and glory, not cryin' and takin' on !"

"Let her be," said the Captain. "She is riled. Give her time. Just now, Miss Avis, you think it is mean. Why, all's fair in love. And after a few days, when you've picked up a bit, we shall be friends again. I am only sorry there's never a stewardess on board."

Here one of the cabin doors opened, and a woman stepped out.

"There is a stewardess, Captain Ramsay."

At sight of her, the Captain stepped back with an oath.

"Olive ! By all the powers !" "Oh ! Lord !" cried Stephen, starting. "Here's his wife !"

"What do you—how did you," stammered the Captain. It was not pretty to look upon his face, on which was expressed a vehement desire to break the sixth commandment.

She was a tall and handsome woman, of five-and-twenty or so, with a profusion of black hair, and black eyes. She was plainly dressed ; on her finger I noticed a wedding-ring.

"I am a stowaway," she said. "You did not expect me here. Yet I told you at Liverpool that I would never leave you. And I never will !"

"She never will," murmured Stephen, in a kind of admiring stupor. "She looks as if she never would."

"I will murder you ! Do you hear ?" The Captain snatched at his waistcoat, as if to draw the revolver which he generally carried there. "I will murder you ! You shall be thrown overboard ! I say, I will kill you !"

"Do not be afraid, child," she said to me, apparently paying no attention to his angry gestures. "He will not murder me. He would, if he dared, but even the sailors of this ship, rough as they are, would not screen him if he did. And he does not desire to be hanged."

She was quite quiet ; her face was very pale ; her lips were set. I learned, afterwards, to love her. But at first I was afraid of her.

"This," said Stephen, "is the very deuce an' all. What's to be done now ?"

"Who are you ?" I asked. "Oh ! tell me if you, too, are in a plot with these wretched men !"

"I am the wife of the man who calls himself Captain Ramsay," she replied. "There stands my husband."

"It's a lie !" shouted the Captain, emphasising his words in manner common among men of his kind. "It's a LIE ! She has been divorced by the law of the country. I have no wife."

"I wear your wedding-ring still." She showed it on her finger. "I refuse your divorce. I will not acknowledge the law which allows a man to put away a wife without a reason. I am still your wife. I shall follow you wherever you go. I came across the Atlantic, to Liverpool, after you. I came on board this ship after you. I shall make the voyage with you."

The Captain laughed.

"You shall," he said. "Hang me if you shall leave the ship till I let you. You shall follow me—whether you like it or not—to Dixie's Land."

"Even there," she said, though she shivered, "I will venture. I know what is in your wicked brain. Yet I am not afraid. I am here to protect this innocent girl. As for you," she turned to the unfortunate pilot, "I have heard of you. You are still, old man, as you always have been, the stupid tool of this man. At his bidding, and for no use or help to yourself, you are ready to throw away your immortal soul. Go out of our sight! Go, I say!"

Stephen straightened his back with an effort, and cleared his throat. He looked at me, who was now clinging to Olive, and then at his chief, who stood biting his lip, with an angry flush upon his cheek, and a look that meant revenge if he could get it.

"Come, Cap," said Stephen, "we can do no good here. Come on deck." He led the way, and mounted the companion with alacrity. "Phew!" he whistled on deck. "Trouble a-brewin' now. What shall we do next?"

"If I could——" the Captain began, but stopped short.

"You can't, Captain," said Stephen. "The men would see it; Avis would see it. Put it out of your thoughts. Now mind. When I said I'd help bring the gell aboard, I never bargained for Olive as well. What about Nassau?"

"Now," said Olive kindly, when we were alone, "tell me who you are, and what has happened."

"Oh! he has stolen me! He asked me to come on board; he pretended to be my friend; and he has stolen me. And Jack is coming back on Saturday to marry me!"

"My poor child!"—her tears fell with mine—"this is terrible, indeed. But, courage. I am here. We are on his ship, and cannot choose but go with him. Yet—yet—I do not think he will dare to harm either of us. My dear, he is afraid of me."

"Are you indeed his wife?"

"It is my unhappy lot," she replied, "to be the wife of the worst man, I believe, in all the world. Yet needs must that I follow him, whatever be the end."

I waited to hear more.

"I was married to him," she went on, "six years ago. He tired of me in a month. Then he deserted me, and sent me letters

from places where he never went, or else he sent no letters at all. I found him out. Again he deserted me, and again I found him out. He took me to the State of Indiana, where he got something that he called a divorce. I know not on what pretence, and do not care. He left me there without money and without friends. But I found both, and followed him again, tracing him from port to port, for such as he seldom go inland. Then I learned that he had gone to Liverpool, and I followed him, and found him again. It was the old story. He began by cursing, and ended by lying. He was going to London; he would send me money. He would let things go on as if he had not got his divorce. I did not believe him. And presently I discovered that he was at the docks every day, loading a vessel which he was to command. I guessed pretty well where the cargo of that ship was destined for. There are dangers in that voyage which no woman should face, and dangers for me that you cannot think of. Yet it seemed as if I had no choice but to go. I learned when the ship would sail, and I came aboard and hid myself. I ought to leave him to his fate," she went on, sitting with clasped hands. "I have been beaten by him like a disobedient dog; I have been cursed and abused; I have been robbed and starved; I have been neglected and deserted. But I cannot abandon him. I am driven to follow him wherever he may lead. It may be I shall yet—— But I do not know. His conscience is dead within him: he is no longer a man. From the first week I knew him to be gambler, drunkard, and manslayer; a defier of God's law; one of those who work evil with greediness; yet I cannot choose but go after him, even if my choice land me again on the shore of North Carolina."

"And why do you fear to go there?"

"Child, you do not know the Southern States." She laughed bitterly. "They are the home, in your English papers and your New York correspondents, of the chivalry and nobility of America. They are also the home of the slave. There are black slaves, brown slaves, olive-coloured slaves, and white slaves. I was a white slave. I am one of those unfortunates for whom they are fighting. I am a darkey—a Nigger."

"You?"

"Yes; I. You would not think, to look at me, perhaps, that I have been a slave. Yet it is true. The young ladies with

whom I was brought up had not whiter skin than mine. Yet my great-great-grandmother was a black woman. So I was a slave. You are not an American, and so you do not shrink back with loathing. I was a slave, and one day, being then seventeen years of age, and unwilling to be the mother of more slaves, I started on a long journey by the Underground Railway, and got safe to Canada."

"Is it possible?" cried Avis, forgetting for a moment her own troubles.

"Yes; it is true. I went to Montreal, where I hoped to find employment and friends. There I met Captain Valentine Angel—as he then called himself—who was so good as to fall in love with me, and I with him. We were married. And now you know my story."

"And if you go back again to North Carolina?"

"In the old days, if a runaway slave was caught, they flogged him. Now, when the Northern soldiers are gathering round them, and their cause is hopeless; now, when they tremble lest fresh stories of cruelties to blacks should be invented or found out, I think they would hardly dare to flog a white woman. Yet one knows not. The feeling is very strong, and the women are cruel—more cruel than the men."

"But they will not know you. They cannot find you out. They will have ceased to search for you."

"My dear, there are depths of wickedness possible which you cannot suspect. My husband knows my story, because I could hide nothing from him. I have seen, in his eyes, what he thinks of doing. But courage, my child; there are many accidents. We shall put in at Nassau for coal. There we may find a chance; or we may be captured; or we may run away when we get to Wilmington. Woman's wit against man's, my dear. They can plan their clumsy plots, but they cannot always carry them through. And he is afraid of me. That is always in our favour."

We then began to consider how we could best protect ourselves on the voyage. Olive advised that we should go on deck as much as possible, so that all the sailors should know that we were aboard, and grow accustomed to see us; that we should never for a moment leave each other; that we should share the same cabin; that we should refuse to listen to, or

speak with, either the Captain or his accomplice.

"Lastly, my dear," said Olive, "among wild beasts it is well to have other means of defence than a woman's shrieks. I have—for the protection of us both—this."

She produced a revolver.

"A pretty toy," she said, "but it is loaded, and it shall be used, if need be, for the defence of you as well as myself."

Thus began this miserable voyage, wherein my heart was torn by anxieties and fears. What would be the end?

Presently we went on deck. The land was nearly out of sight; we were on the broad Atlantic. The ship rolled in the long swell; the day was bright; the breeze fresh. Beside the helm stood the Captain, who scowled, but said not a word.

The crew were lying about the deck, except one or two, on watch in the bows. As the ship carried neither yards nor sails, there was little or nothing to do, and they mostly sat sleeping or telling yarns all the voyage. Olive led me for'ard. Stephen, although the pilot, and therefore a person of great importance, was among the common sailors, sitting in the sun, his pipe in his mouth, with two or three listeners, foremost among the spinners of yarns. He sat there—whether of free choice, or because he wished to avoid me—all the voyage. Nor did he once speak to me; on the contrary, if he saw us amidships, he dived below, and if he was aft when we came up from the saloon, he went for'ard. I think he was ashamed and anxious, for he had not reckoned on the appearance of Olive. She, for her part, knew some of the men, and addressed them by name. She had sailed with them before the war, when her husband was in some more legitimate trade. She called them by their names, one after the other. They were such names as sailors give each other, such as Liberty Wicks, who was quartermaster; Soldier Jack, so called because he was reported to have been a deserter from an English regiment in Canada; Old Nipper, the meaning of whose name I do not know; Long Tom, a lanky thin man of six feet six, with a stoop in his shoulders caused by stooping continually 'tween decks; Pegleg Smith, who went halt; and the Doctor, as they called the cook. They grinned, made a leg, and touched their foreheads; they knew that Olive was the Captain's wife; they knew that she was a stowaway, and had come after her

husband ; they knew that I had been entrapped aboard. That was what Olive wanted.

"For, my dear," she said, "suppose my husband was to catch me by the heels some dark night and tip me overboard, which he would very much like to do, these men would miss me, and by degrees the thing would become known."

"That would not restore you to life."

"No, my dear; but it might make things safer for you."

The Captain seemed to have no objection to our talking with the sailors. It was not his plan to show us the least unkindness on the voyage : we were to be perfectly free. We found them a rough, reckless set of men, of the kind who would follow a leader anywhere, provided he gave them plenty to eat, drink, and smoke. Such must have been the men who went about with the pirate captains, and hoisted the black flag : they loved plunder, and were not afraid of battle. Such must have been the buccaneers who would have no peace on the Spanish Main ; such were the followers of Pizarro and of Cortes. They were also traders. Every man had his private venture on board—his case of "notions"—out of which he would make a hundred per cent. profit. They believed in the luck of their captain, and in his daring. Most of them knew Stephen of old, and trusted in his skill. They laughed at the risk of Yankee steel, Yankee steamers, and Yankee shot ; they boasted of the runs they had had in a vessel not so fast as the Maryland, which could show a clean pair of heels to any cruiser Uncle Jonathan could set afloat. In a few days they would be under the fort at Wilmington, their cargo landed and sold, their private ventures converted into dollars, and their craft taking in cotton for the homeward run.

These honest fellows concerned themselves not at all about the causes and the merits of the war : that was a merry time which made them rich : that cause was righteous in which they could earn fifty pounds a man for the double trip, and frolic ashore like Nelson's bull-dogs after they were paid their prize-money. So far from wishing that the war would speedily end, they devoutly hoped that it would go on, and with the view of forwarding this object they would encourage, if they had any voice in the matter, every Southerner who could carry a rifle or lie behind a gabion to go to the front. They were more patriotic

even than the Confederates themselves ; they were more sanguine of success even than the English sympathisers ; and though most of them, including the Captain, were Northerners by birth, they vied with each other in protesting hatred undying to the Yankees and their cause.

"One thing," said Olive, "my husband might have done. He dare not do it, though, because he would lose the respect of all Americans. He might tell them that he has married a coloured girl. You would witness, then, for yourself, something of the loathing which the presence of the negro blood rouses among Americans."

I have mentioned the bo's'n and quartermaster, Liberty Wicks, who was often at the wheel. Now, one day, soon after the voyage began, a very singular thing happened.

The Captain was on the bridge, Stephen was for'ard, no one was aft except Olive and myself and the quartermaster, who, as usual, was making his two eyes do double duty. We were sitting in silence, when we became aware of a hoarse whisper.

"There's friends aboard." It was Liberty Wicks. "Friends. Don't fear nothing. Wait till you get to North Carolina. Don't look at me. Don't answer."

After this we were comforted, on every possible opportunity, with the assurance that there were friends aboard.

Then, day after day, the ship held her course, and we two women remained unmolested, walking on deck, or sitting in the little saloon, unnoticed. We talked little, having too much to think about. The Captain raised his cap to us in the morning, but he avoided the eyes of his wife. Stephen, as I have said, skulked and remained for'ard. We were supplied with what we wanted, as if we had been in a hotel. Always we had the same bright and beautiful sunshine, with fresh breezes ; always the long rolling waves and billows, the broad streak of white foam which lay like a roadway where the ship had been.

When I think of that voyage, it seems to me like a bad and dreadful dream—that kind of dream in which one is wafted gently onward by some unknown agency towards a horrible, dreadful, unknown end ; the dream out of which one awakens with shuddering, and a fearful sense of its reality. The days which followed slowly seemed all alike from hour to hour : that, too, was dream-like : there was no occupa-

tion, which was dream-like : the sight of the slight spare man, with the smooth cheeks and the glittering eyes, was like a dream : the mysterious protection of this woman resolute and brave, who said she had been a slave, but whose skin was white like my own, was dream-like. What had become of the old quiet time ? Was there any Boscastle ? Was there any Jack at all, or was he, too, a part and parcel of this dreadful dream ?

We sailed into warmer latitudes. It was pleasant to sit on deck at daybreak and watch the red sunrise fiery from the waves ; or at evening, when he sank out of sight before our bows, so that we seemed as if we were steering straight into some land of enchantment, where clouds and land and sea alike were bathed in gorgeous colours and lapped in perpetual warmth ; at noon-tide, when it was too hot to sit on deck, we lay on the sofas of the saloon, silent, or in whispers asking each other what would be the end. We had no books ; we had no paper, pens, or ink ; we had no dresses to make or mend, nor anything to make or mend with ; there was nothing to do except to sit and wait. The silence grew awful ; we ceased to feel the regular beat of the screw ; it became noiseless, like a pulse which is neither heard nor felt ; the Captain gave no orders ; the very crew became silent ; the roll of the ship was like the throbbing of her engines, monotonous and unnoticed.

So that, in the silence, our senses seemed to quicken, and one night, sitting in the saloon after nightfall, we heard voices above us on the deck.

One of the speakers was Stephen.

"It's a bad business, Cap'en," he said. "Look at it any way, no way I like it. What are we to do next ?"

"I don't know, Steve. That is a fact. Your girl and me won't run easy in harness so long as the other one is about ; they must be separated before we can do anything else."

Olive caught my hand. We listened for more.

"Land 'em both at Nassau, and be shut of the whole job," counselled Stephen. "No good ever come of a voyage with a passel o' women aboard. Might as well have a bishop, or Jonas himself."

"I might put Olive ashore," said the Captain ; "and we could carry the other on to Wilmington. Olive would scream a bit, but then, she'd have to go. As for Nassau, we are not going to New Providence at all.

Don't you think, Stephen, after it's cost me all the money to ship my crew, half paid down and all, that they're going to have the chance of getting ashore and staying there. Why, once ashore, it might be a fortnight before I could get them all back again. No ; the coal's lying on Stony Cay, where we'll take it on board and so off again. We might land her on the cay, to be sure, but there's no rations and no water."

"You can't land the woman there, Cap'en. The men wouldn't stand it."

"I can't, because I've got a white-livered lot aboard who'd make a fuss. I could if I had the crew with me that I had twenty years ago when we made that famous run. You hadn't gone soft, then."

"I was younger then," said Stephen. "When a man gets twenty years older, he thinks twice before he chuck's his niggers overboard or lands people on desert islands. Not that I ever approved of them ways."

"You looked on a powerful lot while such things were being carried on, at any rate. No, I think the first plan I thought of will be the best."

"What is the first plan ?"

"Never mind, Stephen. Perhaps the plan is a rough way, of which you would not approve."

"Courage, Avis," whispered Olive ; "courage, child ; we are not separated yet ; there is always hope. Even a shot between wind and water, and a sinking of the ship with all her wicked crew, would be better than such a fate as the man intends for you. But that fate will not be yours. Some women, my dear, are prophetesses ; I think I am one ; and I see, but I know not how, a happy ending out of this for you—but not for me."

There is an islet among the Bahamas lying just at the entrance of Providence Channel, some sixty miles north-east of Nassau. The small maps do not notice so insignificant a rock, but on the charts it is called Stony Cay. It is, in fact, nothing but a rock, on which nothing lives in ordinary times ; but it was used in those days by blockade-runners as a small station where they could take in coal without the risk of losing men by desertion, and with little fear of observation. It is as barren as Ascension, and as stony as Aden ; nothing grows upon it, and the only water is that which in the cold season lies in pools among the rocks. Two or three men were there in charge of the stores, and, as a

warning to American cruisers, the Union Jack was kept flying from a mast. Thither we steered, and here the men made their final preparations.

The coaling, with these preparations, occupied three days; for they began by taking on board as much coal as they could carry, and then set to work to telescope the funnel: that is, to lay it flat upon the deck, so that, instead of the long tail of smoke which shows a steamer so far off, the smoke should be discharged over the surface of the water where it would not be seen; their coal, too, was anthracite, which burns with little smoke: then they overhauled what little rigging they had, and fitted a look-out on the fore-top; they lowered the boats level with the gunwales, and the chief engineer reported on his engines.

All this time it seemed as if no watch were set upon the two prisoners; the crew came and went about their business; the Captain stood about and looked on; Stephen Cobblewick sat for'ard doing nothing, as becomes a pilot; the boats kept coming and going all day long, heavy barges full of coal; nothing seemed easier than to get ashore. But what then? The island had no inhabitants; there were no signs of water; there was no chance of any ship putting in there except for the same purpose as the Maryland. What could we do if we were to land?

"Patience, Avis," said Olive. "Three days more will bring us to the end of this chapter."

The steward told us, what we pretty well knew before, that they were going to run the blockade into Wilmington, on the coast of North Carolina; that the place was about seven hundred miles distance from the Bahamas, and that the real danger was about to begin. Hitherto there had been none, except the chance of bad weather, for the Maryland, built for nothing but speed, and just heavy enough to stand the waves of an ordinary stiff breeze, would infallibly have gone down in a gale.

"The danger may mean deliverance, my dear," Olive said for Avis's consolation. "The cruisers may take us. In that case, you are safe; you have only to seek out the British Consul, and tell him who you are, and why you were on board the ship. As for me—"

"As for you, Olive?" asked Avis.

"I must follow my husband," she replied. "If we are taken, he will go to a New York

prison; and I must go, too, to look after him."

When the sun went down on the third day, the engines got up steam; by midnight the Maryland was out of the narrow waters and rolling among the great waves of the Gulf Stream. The night was exactly the kind of night which blockade-runners, buccaneers, privateers, and pirates always most delight in; a dark night with a new moon; cloudy, too. The steamer carried no lights. By the wheel stood the Captain, and old Stephen ready to take his place as pilot. As for us, we were too anxious to stay below, and were on deck looking and waiting.

At this time, when the war had been carried on for a couple of years and there seemed little hope of a speedy conclusion, the spirit of the North was fairly roused. While the volunteers were pouring into the camp by thousands, they were sending new and fast cruisers to the Southern shores as quickly as they could be built. Every day increased the risk of a successful run; every day, however, the value of the cargo was increased.

"Stephen," we heard the Captain say, "I have got a note from Nassau. The Yanks expect me; they don't know I've arrived and started; but there's a notion among the cruisers that I'm to be met with somewhere about this time. I know what their ships are, and where they're stationed. Twenty-five steamers are lying off Wilmington this night as close as they can lie—out of the range of Fort Fisher. Half-a-dozen more are cruising about these waters. I make no count of them. Now, Stephen, the only thing to decide is whether it's best to dash through the line or to creep along the coast."

"The coast," said Stephen, "is a awkward coast. There's nothing to steer by; there's sands, and there's never a light."

"We can show a light from the inshore side. They will answer it; they are on the look-out all night."

"I would rather," said Stephen, "make a dash for it. Once inside their line they will find it hard to stop us."

"Can you find the mouth of the river in the night?"

"I can find the mouth of that river blindfold; never fear that; what I think of is the shifting sands along the coast, if we have to creep in."

"Pray Heaven!" whispered Olive, "that one of those half-dozen cruisers catch us."

We passed a sleepless night. Half-a-dozen times, at least, the engines were stopped on an alarm being given from the watch in the fore-top, and we expected to hear a cannon-shot crash into the vessel, or an order, at least, to lay to. Presently the engines would go on, and the ship proceed on her way, though perhaps on another tack. We showed no light; our coal gave out little smoke, and that little, as I have said, was discharged from the stern, the funnel lying flat along the deck.

At daybreak we rose and went on deck again. None of the men seemed to have gone below. Stephen and the Captain stood together by the wheel; all hands were on the watch, though as yet it was too dark to see far; and the men, if they spoke at all, spoke in whispers. As the sun rose behind us, we found ourselves alone upon the ocean; not a sail was in sight.

"No cruiser yet," I whispered to Olive. "Shall we reach Wilmington to-night?"

"A steamer," cried the man in the fore-top, "off the starboard bow!"

I could see nothing; the broad face of the ocean glowed in the bright sunshine.

"He sees," said Olive, "a faint wreath of smoke."

I suppose we altered our course, because we saw no more of that steamer. We ran till noon without further adventure; then another, and another, and another alarm were given in quick succession, and the wheel went round and the vessel changed her course. There was no waiting to make out the distant ship; every stranger was a supposed enemy.

Before long we, too, whose interest it was that the ship should be taken, shared in the general excitement, and stood on deck watching the horizon, which lay clear and well defined, with neither mist nor fog to hide it.

No bells were rung that day. At noon the chief officer made his observations and reported to the Captain, who mechanically ordered him to "make it so," but he made it in silence. There were no meals served; any man who felt hungry went into the cook's galley and got something; the cook himself was in the bows; the steward, who brought us some tea, hurried back to be on the watch with the rest. Now and then one, tired, lay down on deck in the sun and fell asleep for an hour or two. Darkness fell; but the ship pushed on, all hands as before remaining on deck all night. We

remained on deck till midnight, when we reluctantly went below.

"I almost hope," said Olive, "that we shall get through them."

In the morning, which was cloudy with a little fog, though there was a steady breeze from the north-west, we made our first escape. It was just before daybreak; we, who could not sleep, were on deck again. All night there had been frequent alarms, but happily (or unhappily) we passed the danger. This time, however, things looked as if our run had come to an end.

The mist had thickened; the day was slowly breaking; we held our course but at half speed; suddenly there seemed to spring out of the water a cruiser three times our size, under steam and sail. We were almost under her bows; they shouted to us; their men sprang into the rigging to furl the sails; we saw them hastily run out the guns.

"Avis!" cried Olive, "you are saved!"

Not yet. Captain Ramsay gave an order in his quiet voice, the wheel flew round, and the next moment we were astern of the vessel, at full speed steaming in the teeth of the wind. With such way as was on the cruiser, she was out of sight in the mist almost before we had time to look. There was a great popping of guns, and one cannon-shot, but no damage done; and when the mist presently cleared, and the sun rose, we could indeed see her smoke away on the north horizon, but we were invisible to her.

That night we were to run the blockade.

The blockading fleet was chiefly concentrated round the port of Wilmington. There were, as the Captain said, twenty-five vessels lying or cruising, in a sort of semi-circle, ten miles round the mouth of the river, on one bank of which was Fort Fisher. It was prudent to keep outside the range of that fortress's guns. And without the circle were some half-dozen fast-steaming cruisers always on the lookout. That evening the Captain called the men aft.

"My lads," he said, "I had intended to make a dash for it, as I have often done before. You are not the men to be afraid of a shot or two; but this unfortunate falling in with one of their ships makes it seem best to try creeping along shore, for the alarm will be given. Therefore, every man to his post, and not a word spoken; and, with good luck, we will be inside Fort Fisher before daybreak."

The men retired. Then night fell, and we could hear the beating of our hearts.

Stephen now took the wheel himself, and the Captain became a sort of chief officer. At the helm, proud of his skill and new employment, Stephen looked something like that beautiful old man whom I had found sleeping. The cunning, sensual look was gone from him ; he stood steady as a lion, yet eager and keen, with every sense awake. Presently he ordered half speed ; then we sounded ; then we forged ahead a bit ; sounded again ; then before us I saw, low and black in the night, the coast of America.

Stephen kept her on her way slowly and cautiously ; the screw never ceased, but we crept slowly along, hugging the shore as near as he dared.

"A few more yards nearer, Pilot ?" asked the Captain.

"No, sir. I daren't do it. We are as near— What's that ? See now."

A long, grating sound as the bottom just touched the sand. The ship cleared the shallow, and continued her slow, silent crawling along the shore.

How long was that night ! How slowly the hours crept on ; how patiently the men watched and worked.

I suppose it must have been about two o'clock in the morning, or rather later, the ship still cautiously hugging the dark line of coast, that the end came.

We were moving so slowly that the motion of the screw could hardly be felt ; the night was very still and dark ; the sea a dead calm. We were as close to the shore as the Pilot could possibly take her ; the men in the bows were sounding perpetually, and sending the depth aft in whispers. We had shown a light on the inshore side ; this was answered by two lights, so faint as to be invisible farther out ; they were the lights to guide the Pilot into the harbour. Success was already in the Captain's hand ; a few minutes more and the last few yards of the long voyage would be run in safety.

Then there was a snapping as of wood in the bows, a cry of alarm ; and the next moment a rocket shot high in the air. On our starboard, not a hundred yards from us, was lying one of the cruisers, and the rocket had gone up from a rowing barge, sent out to signalise a chance blockade-runner, which boat we had nearly run down.

It would have been better for Captain Ramsay had we run her down altogether.

"Put on all steam," shouted the Captain, as the rocket was answered by a gun, and then another. "Let them blaze away. Now, then. Five minutes' run, lads, and we'll be out of danger. Steady, Pilot, steady!"

"Steady it is, sir," answered Stephen, as another cannon-shot struck the water close to our stern, sending the spray flying.

"If there is to be fighting," said Olive, "we had better be below, where, at least, we shall be a little safer."

We went below ; but we could not escape the horrible banging of the cannon, which seemed to be firing all around us, nor the rattling of the rifles. They fired at random, because they could not see us.

The men lay on the deck, thinking to get shelter from the bullets if any should come their way ; but the Captain stood by the Pilot.

"Plenty of water, Pilot ?" he asked.

"Deep water, sir. Only keep her head straight. As for them lubbers with their guns, why—" Here he stopped, and fell heavily to the deck with a groan. The wheel flew round ; the little steamer swung round with it, and before the Captain could put up the helm, she ran bows on heavily into a sandbank and stopped.

"We are ashore," said Olive quietly. "I think, my dear, that we are saved."

On deck we heard a great trampling. The crew ran aft and jumped to ease her off ; the engines were reversed, but the ship was hard and fast.

No one took any notice of the unfortunate Pilot, the only man struck by the shot. He lay motionless.

"Cap'en," said the quartermaster and bo's'n, Liberty Wicks by name, of whom I have already spoken, "this is a bad job."

Captain Ramsay replied by a volley of oaths.

"They're putting off a boat from the Yankee, sir. Shall we lower boats ?"

The Captain made no reply.

"A New York prison or a run in the Southern States it is, Cap'en."

Still his Captain made no reply.

Then the chief officer came up.

"There is no time to lose, sir. The men are lowering the boats. Shall we put in the women first ?"

The Captain, still silent, went down the companion, followed by the first officer and the boatswain.

Olive had lit our lamp by this time.

"Courage, Avis!" she whispered. "Now is the moment of your deliverance!"

"Come," he said roughly. "The ship is aground. Avis, and you other, come on deck and get into the boats."

"No," said Olive; "we shall remain here."

"I tell you, come!"

Olive stood before me.

"She shall not come!"

"Stand aside!" He added words of loathing and hatred which I will not write down. "Stand aside, or by the Lord I will murder you."

"She shall not go with you. Oh, villain! she shall not go with you!"

"Cap'en, there's no time," growled the quartermaster.

The Captain drew his revolver; the chief officer knocked up his hand.

"No murder, Captain Ramsay," he said, "unless you murder me and the bo's'n too."

"The Yanks are on us!" cried the man. They seized the Captain, one by each arm, and dragged him up the companion. We heard a trampling on deck, a shouting, a pistol shot, and a sound of oars in the water.

"They are chasing the blockade-runners," said Olive. "They will be back presently to scuttle the ship and destroy the cargo. Let us go on deck."

It was too dark to see much. We heard in the distance the regular fall of the oars; we saw a flash from time to time. Then there was silence for awhile, and then we heard the oars again.

"The cruiser's men are coming back," said Olive.

In ten minutes they came alongside, and we saw them climbing on deck. There were twenty of them, armed with cutlasses and pistols, headed by a young Federal officer.

He was greatly surprised to find two ladies on board. But he was civil, asked us who we were, and what we were doing on board a blockade-runner.

Olive told him that I was an English lady who had been brought away against her will, that her own business was my protection.

"We have no business in the South," she said; "and we have no papers."

"What can I do with you?" he asked, evidently not believing the statement. "If I take you aboard, we shall not know whether to treat you as prisoners or not. If I land you, you would be worse off

than before. What is the name of this ship?"

"The Maryland, of Liverpool," said Olive.

"This is her first run."

"And her captain?"

"Captain Ramsay."

The officer whistled.

"I wish I had known," he said. "Well, ladies, the best thing I can do, as you have come all the way to the coast of North Carolina, is to put you ashore on it. No doubt that is what you want; and I wish you joy of Dixie's Land."

"We would rather," said Olive, "that you took us to New York, even as prisoners."

He shook his head and laughed.

Here a deep moan interrupted us, and we became aware for the first time that poor old Stephen was lying wounded at the helm, where he had fallen.

"Water," he groaned.

I fetched him water. Olive raised his head.

"Which of them is this?" asked the Federal.

"He is the pilot," I replied, thinking no harm in telling the truth.

"The pilot, is he? Well, if he recovers, he will find out what the inside of a prison is; because you see, ladies, a pilot must know the shore, and a pilot must, therefore, be a Reb."

He felt Stephen's pulse.

"It is very low. I doubt he is dying." I gave him the water, and he opened his eyes.

"Is that you, Avis? Keep clear of the Captain," he whispered slowly; "he's well-nigh desperate."

"Tell me," I said: "was that story true about the raft?"

"You was," he said, "a Pick-me-up, off a raft in Torres's Straits; wrapp'd in bandannas; and your mother was a Knobling. Your father, he was admiral to the Sultan of Zanzibar." Here he fainted again.

"Come," cried the officer, "we have no time. Bo's'n."

"Sir."

"Put these ladies into the boat, and land them as quickly as you can. Have you anything you wish to take with you?"

"Nothing," said Olive.

"Then"— He raised his cap, and we followed the boatswain.

We were closer to the shore than I thought. In ten minutes the sailors stood

up to help us to land. Then they put off again.

The voyage was over; the ship was ashore; the cargo was lost; the blockade-runners were disappointed; and we were standing, friendless and helpless, on the shores of the New World.

CHAPTER IX. ALL THE WAY BY THE UNDERGROUND.

"Oh, Olive!" I cried, "what shall we do now?"

"I know the country," she replied; "that is a great thing to begin with. They were trying to run the blockade from Long Bay to Smith's Island; we are therefore, I suppose, not far from the mouth of Cape Fear River. Wilmington is twenty miles to the north, and more. He must go to Wilmington first. What will he do afterwards? No one saw us landed," she said, after consideration; "he will think we are taken prisoners by the Federals. He will make for New York in hopes of finding you there."

"Then, if he goes to New York," I said, "we need have no fear for ourselves."

"Nay, my dear," she replied. "Consider, we are in a country torn by civil war; we have no means of showing that we are not spies; I myself may be arrested as a fugitive slave; we have five hundred miles and more to go before we reach a place where I may be free from that danger; we have no money; we have no friends; what will become of you if I am carried off to the State gaol?"

To that I had nothing in reply. What, indeed, would become of me—what would become of her, if she were arrested?

She read my thought.

"My dear," she said, "do not be anxious about me. I have no dread of the prison for myself. At the most it will be a short captivity, because sooner or later—and I think very soon—the South must collapse. Then abolition will set us all free. No fear, now, of any compromise. At first, indeed, when it seemed as if they were fighting for a point of law in which the South had the best of it, I trembled lest a peace might be patched up, and the cause of the slave abandoned; now, things have gone too far. The negroes must be emancipated, and with them all the poor mulattoes, octoroons, and whites who have the taint of negro blood, the most wretched victims of this most wicked system. Come," she continued, after a

pause, "we must not linger on the shore. Follow me; I think I can take you to a place where, for a day or two if necessary, we shall contrive a hiding-place."

It was time to decide on something, because figures were to be seen running backwards and forwards on the sands; a bright light shot up from the ill-fated Maryland, and boats were seen putting off from shore.

"The Federals have set fire to the ship," said Olive; "those boats are put off by the negroes, anxious to secure something from the wreck. The light of the fire will be useful to us."

She hesitated a little.

"Close by," she said, "but whether to the right or to the left, is a little village called Smithville; five or six miles west of Smithville is the village of Shallotte; due north of us lies the Great Green Swamp. There I am sure to find a place where no one will look for us, and where we can rest, though the accommodation will be rather rough for you. Are you tired?"

"I must be tired indeed," I said, "if I could not find strength to escape from that man."

It was still dark night. The flames of the burning ship mounted high and shed a lurid light, which was of some use to us, if not much. Olive led the way, which was over sand hills and across sandy ground, fatiguing to walk over. After half an hour's walking we came to ground which was wet and marshy.

"This," said Olive, "is the beginning of the swamp. Great swamps lie all along the coast; they were designed by Providence, I believe, for the hiding-places of runaways. Some years ago, when I made up my mind there was nothing before me but disgrace and wretchedness, unless I ran away, I betook myself to this swamp. Here I lived among friendly blacks, until a way was opened for me to escape. I want to go back to my old friends and escape, with you, once more, by the old route—the Underground Railway."

She went on to inform me that stations had been established by Northern sympathisers, where runaways were received, entertained, and forwarded on their way with money and provisions. Those who acted the part of hosts did so at the risk of death; because, whatever mercy might be shown them by the law, none would

be shown by the mob. She did not suppose, she said, that these stations were altogether broken up by the outbreak of civil war ; rather, because the abolitionists had always many friends in the South, they would be multiplied and hedged round by greater precautions.

" If we had money," she said, " I would travel openly by way of Columbia, in South Carolina, to Tennessee and Kentucky. The hue and cry would scarcely reach so far. Besides, we might disguise ourselves as boys if it were necessary. But without money what can we do but incur suspicion ? Therefore, for a second time, I will try the Underground."

We walked slowly along, I, for one, being faint from hunger. The path—if it was a path—was soft and yielding, yet Olive went on in full assurance. We had left the shore and the burning ship far behind us. Presently the day broke, and I found we were in a kind of forest, the like of which I had never seen. The soil was sometimes of silvery sand, in which grew tall pine-trees ; a never-ending expanse of pine-trees ; sometimes a green swamp, in which cypresses, with great trunks and roots sticking up like boulders, took their place. Among them were also the sycamore and the beech, with trees whose names I did not know. There was also a beautiful underwood of trailing vines and creepers, which climbed to the very tops of the trees and hung down in network. When the sun rose there rose with him flocks of great buzzards, sailing slowly over the tree-tops, and the air became musical with the notes of smaller birds. But no road or path, no cultivation, no huts, no rising smoke, no sign of human habitation.

" Before the war," said Olive, " there would have been danger from turpentine factories scattered about on the edge of the swamp. Now their owners have gone to the front and the factories are stopped. So much the better for us."

" Oh, Olive," I cried, feeling as if flight were useless and it were better to drop down and let what might-be come, " is there much farther to walk ? "

" Not much, before we make our first halt," she replied ; " but I know not what to expect for food."

I suppose a mile or so is not much ; to a strong girl it means twenty minutes' walk ; to me it seemed as if we should never come to an end.

" I am looking," said Olive, " for Daddy

Galoon's hut. It is six years and more since last I came here ; but the woods were blazed, and I have followed their guidance. And I think, Avis, I think that—Here it is."

Within a little clump of pines standing on a knoll, was a hut, at the door of which sat an old negro. He was dressed in nothing, apparently, but a pair of cotton trousers and a cotton shirt. He was old and bowed, yet his eye was bright and keen. He rose slowly, as Olive pushed her way between the trunks, and stared at her curiously, but not as if he were frightened.

" Don't you remember me, Daddy ?" she asked.

" I guess," he replied, " I tink for suah, you'm Missy Olive, from Squire Cassilly's over dah way yander. What you'm doin' back again ? Wan' anuder journey by dat Undergroun' ? Ho !"

" I am back again, Daddy, because I couldn't help it. First, give this young lady some breakfast."

He peered into my face and took hold of my hand.

" Dis young lady not a yaller gal; guess she is from de Norf."

" No, Daddy ; she is from England. She has enemies, and she has no money ; she will travel with me."

He gave me some simple food — cold boiled pork, with meal and honey—which I devoured greedily ; and then, overcome with fatigue, I lay down in a corner, the old man covering me with a blanket, and fell fast asleep.

It was evening when I awoke. Olive was sitting beside me, patient, watching, just as she had sat beside me on board the Maryland. Nothing changed her face. It was always sad ; always the face of one who has suffered ; always the face of one who expects more suffering ; always patient.

We made our supper as we had made our breakfast, off pork and meal and honey. Then Olive told me something of her plans.

This old negro, who, by some accident, or for something he had done, had long since received his freedom, came to Green Swamp thirty years before, and settled in the hut which he built there. How he lived it was difficult to say ; he grew nothing ; he had neither pigs nor cattle nor fowls ; he did, apparently, no work ; yet he had money, and bought things at the nearest village where there was a store.

In fact, the old man occupied a terminus station on the great many branched Underground Railway. All the slaves in North Carolina knew that; but, at a time when to be found guilty of such a crime was enough to make the neighbourhood rise and burn the man alive, when any reward would have been offered for conviction, not a negro or a mulatto in the State ever gave information. If a "boy" wanted to run away, he would go naturally and without being told to Daddy Galoon's, who would pass him on to the next station.

The station of Green Swamp was safe too, because the place was intersected by so many streams that the hounds used in hunting fugitives were easily put off the scent. Therefore, for twenty years old Daddy had been passing them along. No one knew of his existence, except his own people: no one knew of his hut except those to whom the secret blazing of the trees had been confided.

"It is much easier than it was," said Olive. "All the men who used to live by hunting us are gone to the war; their packs of hounds are destroyed; the mean whites who loafed around, too proud to work, and only too happy to join in a nigger hunt, have all been drafted to the armies in the field; people are too busy to look much after us; I do not think we shall have much trouble, unless my—the Captain—has had me already proclaimed. The chief fear is that, as we cannot account for ourselves, we may be taken for spies. If only we had some money!"

She then told me that Daddy had gone to Wilmington to ascertain if anything had been done.

He came back next day with news which made my blood boil.

Captain Ramsay had learned that we had been put ashore; some "beach combers," some of the men who prowled about to pick up what they could from the wreck of a blockade-runner, had seen us landed by the Federal boat. His first idea was to go in search of us, but he was ignorant of the country; he next proposed to organise a hunting party in the ancient fashion, with hounds; this fell through because he could get no one to join him; the old pastime of the nigger chase was forgotten in those days of fiercer excitement; besides, there were too many English and others in Wilmington just then, for it was a time when all parties in the South were anxious to stand well with England, and

not get bad reports spread about the cruelty of the Institution. Finally, he advertised us. And the old man brought us a copy of his infamous placard:

"ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD."—Run away. The girl Olive, the property of Squire Cassily, Cumberland County. Mulatto, will pass for white. Black hair, black eyes, twenty-five years of age. Also the girl Avis, eighteen years of age, mulatto, brown hair, and blue eyes. Tries to pass for an Englishwoman. Property of Jefferson Ramsay, master mariner.

"Were last seen together on the shore near Smithville. Will endeavour to escape to the North. The above reward will be given to any who will bring these girls together to the advertiser, Captain Ramsay aforesaid."

Would anyone believe that a man could be so villainous? One of these women, his wife, put away by some idle form of law, and the other the girl to whom he had offered love, and the protection of a husband. He would hunt down both by slave-dealers; he would hand over one to the tender mercies of her former master, and the other—what would he do with the other?

"We need not ask that question, Avis," said Olive, "because you shall not fall into his hands."

"What shall we do, Daddy?" she asked the old negro.

"Missy bes' stay here day or two. Nobody gwine come here. Dey won' hunt in de swamp. By'm-by, forget about it; den missy start right away."

This seemed good advice, and we resolved to adopt it.

After three weary days in the hut, it was determined that we should make a start. I was rested, and felt strong again in the bracing sharp air of this strange new country. We had twelve miles to make that day, with Daddy as our guide, through the wild untrodden forest land.

This stage was easily done. We halted for dinner at noon in one of the clumps of cypress of which I have spoken, and reached our night quarters—another hut, provided with little except two or three blankets and a cache of preserved soup, which he dug up from where he had put it, and of which we made our dinner.

The next day's stage was the same. All this time the country did not change. Always the swamp and the sand; always

the pines and the cypresses ; always overhead the buzzards ; and only sometimes, to vary the monotony, a flock of wild turkeys or a herd of deer.

On the third day we were to leave the swamp and take to the roads and villages, when our danger would begin.

"Olive," I said, "if they take us prisoners, what will they do next ?"

"They would be obliged, I suppose, to take us to Wilmington in order to get the reward."

"Would they—would they be cruel ?"

"Well, my dear," she replied calmly, "slave-catchers are not the most kindly of men. But I doubt their daring to inflict any cruelty upon us."

I conjured up a dreadful vision of manacles, chains, and men brandishing heavy whips, which remained with me until our escape was accomplished. I was, I confess, horribly frightened. The name of slave to an English girl has something truly terrible in it ; that I should be actually advertised for as a runaway slave, was a thing most appalling to me. Olive, to whom it had happened before, naturally took things more quietly.

The house which was to receive us on the third day was on the confines of a little town. It belonged to a Baptist minister, who, a Northerner by birth, had long since journeyed South with the sole object of helping runaways to escape. It was courageous and noble of him ; how he reconciled it with his conscience as a Christian to carry on the deception of being a violent partisan of the South and admirer of the Institution, I do not know. Daddy Galoon timed the march this day so as to bring us to the house after dark. It was a wooden house, like all the rest, standing within a small fence. The old man removed a bar and we stepped over. He led the way to a back door, at which he gave four knocks, which evidently belonged to the secrets of his trade. The door was instantly opened, and a lady invited us to step in.

We found ourselves in a room which seemed to serve as kitchen and dining-room.

Daddy stood in the doorway. He came no farther with his pilgrims. Here he took off his hat, and said solemnly, "De Lord bress de runaways !" Then he shut the door and disappeared, to return to his solitary hut in the Green Swamp and wait for more.

"Good Heaven, girls !" cried the lady ; "who are you ?"

I now became aware, though horribly tired and oppressed with a dreadful anxiety about my boots, the soles of which were dropping off, that we were addressed by a most delightful old lady, comely, motherly, and kind. To be sure, it was uncommon in her experience to be asked shelter by two white girls, the elder of whom was only five-and-twenty, and the younger had not one single feature of the ordinary mulatto appearance.

Olive, as usual, told the story. She told it calmly, effectively, in a few words, and so clearly that it carried with it the internal evidence of truth. Our protector was indignant. She had never, she said, heard so dreadful a case. Negroes and mulattoes in hundreds had used her house—note that the house would have been burned over their heads had one of the fugitives for hope of reward or fear of punishment informed upon them—they were running away from the lash, from separation, from slavery ; but never before had she heard of a man trying to drive his wife back into slavery, and putting an English girl into the Hue and Cry as an escaped servant, so that he might force her into a form of marriage.

Long before she had concluded her indignant invective against our persecutor I was sound asleep.

We rested here for two days, and were provided by our kind hostess—her husband having gone North in charge of a runaway mulatto family—with changes of dress, of which we were greatly in want. Remember that I was "shipped" with nothing but what I stood in ; while my companion, who could help me a little, had only what she could bring on board in a bag when she became a stowaway. And we were landed with nothing at all, and had marched forty miles and more over bog and rough country, and had slept three nights in log huts. We were, however, in the hands of a true Samaritan, if ever there was one. She gave us a complete new outfit, and provided us with money, which we promised to repay, in case any difficulty should arise in which the almighty dollar might exhibit to advantage.

She was of opinion that the advertisement of us in the Wilmington papers would be copied by others, so that we could not rely upon being out of danger until we were finally out of the Southern States. Virginia, she said, was the most dangerous

country for us, and she counselled us to travel by night if we could, or at all events in the evening, by short stages, and by a route laid down by her, on which we should meet with plenty of friends and sympathisers, because it was the regular way of her "Railway." She also gave us minute directions as to our next resting-place, where we should be entertained and treated in like manner by her friends and fellow-conspirators.

Thus rested and set up, we continued on the third day our long and anxious journey.

Our conductor was a young negro, who informed me, thinking that I was, in spite of blue eyes and fair hair, one of his own people, that he was really free, and had volunteered this dangerous Underground Railway business, pretending to be the minister's slave-boy.

He chose cross roads, the badness of which I could not have thought possible, to our first stage. This, like the preceding, was the first, or last, house in a little village or township, and here we were entertained in like manner, and next day went on. The indignation of our hosts, excited everywhere as we told our story, encouraged them to take every possible precaution with us. Yet once we were in great danger, and escaped only by an accident which I dare not call otherwise than Providential.

The roads in North Carolina were then, whatever they are now, everywhere bad. Roads, indeed, many of them do not deserve to be called; they are mere openings through the forest of the long-leaved pine, or, as they call them, the "piny woods." There are frequent forks, so that it is more easy to lose one's way than to keep it. There are brooks to cross, and fallen trunks to get over. Every now and then we came to a clearing, where maize had been planted, and a small log cottage built. In all of them we saw children, and listless, despondent white women, mostly with pipes in their mouths. All these houses were exactly alike; the furniture was rough and rude; they were dirty; they looked what they were, the houses of ignorant vagabonds, too proud to work in the fields, too lazy for any industry, too stupid for any improvement.

"It is the curse," said Olive, "which slavery brings with it. The land is accursed for the sins of its owners. Nothing prospers. There are no roads; there are no farms; there are no manufactures,

because labour is considered the duty of the blacks."

There were no white men, because they were—unless they were too old—one and all away with the armies of the South. But the women of the cabins asked us no questions, and seemed indifferent whether their cause was winning or losing. They had no papers, no books. I believe most of them could not write. What a dreadful life must theirs be, shut up in the silent woods, with no knowledge of the world beyond, no thought of how life can be made beautiful! "It is the curse of slavery," said Olive.

I do not remember the names of the places we stopped at; they all seemed to me exactly alike. The roads were alike; the country seemed the same day after day. Nor do I remember how many days we had travelled—but it could not have been many—when we fell into our great danger.

It arose from our guide losing his way on the road. Somehow or other we took the wrong fork, and presently, instead of arriving at one of the little places where we were to stay, we drove straight into the very town we wished most to avoid, Fayetteville, which is not only the principal place in North Carolina next to Raleigh, but is also connected by a railway with Wilmington. It was, indeed, a most dangerous place.

Olive instructed our guide to say that we were two ladies on our way to Richmond, and that he was our boy. We then drove to the hotel, and entered boldly. It was then just after dark. It was easy to stay in our room that evening, and a couple of dimes induced one of the servants to bring some supper to us. But the morning would bring its dangers.

We stayed in our room till breakfast-time, when, not being able to make any excuse, we descended slowly to the saloon. There the tables were crowded with guests, who all appeared too much occupied in the business of eating to pay any attention to us. Only one of the company—a sallow, evil-looking man—seemed to me to look at us more curiously than I liked. In fact, his gaze became so earnest that I became faint with terror, and was glad indeed when we could rise and leave the table.

The boy was waiting for us with the trap in which he had driven us from the last station. We brought down our

luggage, paid our bill, and were ready to depart, when the man who had caused me so much terror stepped up to me and touched me on the shoulder with his forefinger.

"Guess," he said roughly, "that you've got to hev a word with me before you go."

"Olive!" I cried, catching her by the arm; "oh! Olive!"

It was the worst thing I could have said. He laughed aloud.

"All right," he said. "Gentlemen, these are two runaway yaller gals, advertised for in the Wilmington Herald. A thousand dollars reward."

I stood trembling. For a moment Olive lost her head. She made as if she would tear me away and fly. Only for a moment.

"Gentlemen," she said, instantly recovering herself, "bear witness, all of you, that I am the wife of an American citizen, and this young lady is an English woman."

There was a movement among the little crowd which gathered round us, and murmurs.

The man replied by reading the advertisement, pointing out as he read the exactness of the description.

Olive whispered me.

"I claim," I cried, "the protection of the British Consul!"

There was no British Consul in the place.

"Is there no one here," I asked, "who will defend two helpless women against a villain?"

"Ef you air runaways," said one man in the crowd; "ef you air yaller—" And at that fatal word all sympathies were dried up.

It seemed there was no help but we must go.

"Na—ow," said our captor, "guess you'd better go quiet, or there's handcuffs and other things."

Just then, however, a rescuer appeared, a veritable St. George, a Perseus, though in the lank shape and forbidding features of Liberty Wicks, bo's'n and quartermaster of the Maryland. It seemed to me a forlorn hope, but Olive cried to him by name, and he turned, and, seeing us, burst through the crowd.

"Darn my scuppers! What's this? Beg your pardon, ladies," taking off his hat; "but what's this little difficulty?"

"Bo's'n," said Olive, quietly and with

dignity, "when I sailed with you from New York to Havannah, four years ago, what was my name? Perhaps you will tell these gentlemen."

"You was Mistress Angel, the captain's wife."

"You hear, gentlemen. The captain's wife. The wife of Captain Angel, of the ship Providence, in the Havannah trade. Is it likely that Captain Angel's wife should be a runaway? Now, will you tell these gentlemen, bo's'n, where you took on board this young lady?"

"Off the port o' Boscastle, on the coast of Cornwall, in England," he replied. "Brought aboard, she was, by the captain and the pilot."

"Now, gentlemen," said Olive, "are you satisfied? Or shall I ask my friend here to protect us against a man, probably a mean Yankee"—she threw infinite contempt into those words—"who would pretend that we are runaway slaves."

Liberty Wicks stepped to the front, and stood before us.

"Ef," he said resolutely, "any man here lays hands on these two ladies, he lays hands on me." He drew a revolver from his breast, and looked round, with his finger on the trigger. "I allow," he said, "two minutes for that onfort'nate cuss to order his coffin."

He had so resolute an air, and looked so terrible, this lanky man with the hard features and the weather-beaten cheeks, that they all drew back.

He then called our boy.

"Where, boy, was you goin' to take these ladies?" he asked.

"They was gwine," said the boy readily, "by the nearest way to Raleigh, on their way to Richmond, in Virginny, where they was to stay with their friends."

"That looks like runnin' away, that does," said Liberty, looking round with triumph. "Goin' to Richmond. Goin' to head-quarters. Now, stand aside, lubbers all, and let the ladies pass. By your leave, ma'am," he touched his hat again, "I will go part of the way with you. Lord love us! Here's a sweet English rosebud for you." He addressed the crowd, but he meant me. "A sweet and pretty blushin' young thing, and you play it that mean on her as to call her a cussed yaller gell. Yah! I'm ashamed o' North Car'lin'a. That's a fact."

We were in the carriage now. He hitched himself on to the footboard, and we drove away as rapidly as our boy dared,

the honest bo's'n hurling derision behind him in language which our would-be captor no doubt understood. To me it was a foreign tongue. When we were outside the town, and again in the "piny woods," he changed his tone.

"Boy," he said, "steer quick out of this road. Take the first fork; never mind where it takes you to. I know that slave-hunting coon. He came down here a purpus on the hunt for the reward. Them mean whites 'ud live on rewards if they could. Thought you'd make for the nearest town, and be landed like a salmon in a net. And he won't give in 'thout another run for't. I see that in his yaller eye. He's gone to git a warrant, an' he'll make tracks after us as fast as he can lay fut to yerth. Therefore, cross country is the word, unless we are all to go to the State gaol together, where you, brother Snowball, will taste the Confederate cat, and I shall grow fat on the Confederate bacon."

The boy grinned, and turned the trap off the main road into one of the little forest tracks.

"Ladies," he went on, "I know all about it, and you kin trust me, for though I was born down to Norfolk, my father was a honest Yank, and as for slavery, why, I just hate ut; there, I hate ut. As for you, marm," he addressed himself to Olive, "it may be true what that murderin' villain said, and it may not be true. All I know for sartain is that you shipped aboard with us twice: wanst you was the Cap'en's wife, and the second time, when the skipper had changed his name, you was a stowaway. And as for you, young lady, you was kidnapped. Now we're comfortable and understand each other; and so, ladies, ef you'll tell me your plans, you may trust me."

It was risky, but we were completely at his mercy, and besides, we remembered his whispers on board the ship.

Olive told him all. She confessed that she had been formerly a slave in this same State, though in appearance as white as any European; that she had escaped by the Underground Railway; that she had told Captain Jefferson Ramsay, alias Valentine Angel, everything before their marriage; that we now designed to effect our escape by the same way in which she had before succeeded; and that it was only by the accident of losing our way that we found ourselves at Fayetteville at all.

He approved our design, and told us, which was a great comfort for us, that Tennessee was most likely, by this time, in the hands of the North, so that once over the Alleghany Mountains we were safe.

He then went on to speak of the Captain.

"At first," he said, "he was mad at losing his ship, his cargo, and—the young lady." Then he begged Olive's pardon.

"You need not," she said. "I know my husband as well as you."

"There is nothing," he told us, "nothing on this yerth that he would not do to gain his ends. Robbery, murder, shootin' and slaughterin', conspirin' and plottin', misrepresentin' and lyin', bullyin' and threatenin', all this comes in the day's work. As for revenge, it is the Cap'en's nature to remember the bad deeds and forget the good. I'm his old shipmet. Well, what then? As fur what I've done in takin' you out o' the hands o' the Malakites, if he had me aboard knifin' would be too good for me. Reckon ef we meet there'll be a hole made in the man who draws the slowest. Bad job fur that man, it'll be. Shipmets we mustn't never be no more. Pity, too, for the Cap'en's got a lucky hand, and blockade-runnin' is sweet and lovely biz for them as likes large profits. Wal, mad at first he waz, and went around like—like a eel in a ash-pit; nobody, not even the chief officer, didn't venture go-a-nigh him fur a spell. Then he heard that you ladies was seen put ashore; and then he put out them advertisements. I've knowned the Cap'en for nigh twenty year, and sailed with him on many a cruise, and seen a deal o' wild and bloody work, but I never seen nor hearn a more desperate wickedness than to call his own wife, and the young lady whom he'd kidnapped, runaway yaller gells. 'Pears most as if I should be feared of sailin' in the same craft with such a man. Talk o' Jonas! What he did wasn't nowhere near it!"

So we changed the route which had been laid down for us by our kind friends of that secret institution which had befriended so many poor creatures, and drove across the strange forest-covered country by the cross tracks which we chose by compass, not knowing whither they would lead us, so only that we should not come out upon any town. Towns, indeed, in North Carolina were scarce.

It was a wonderful journey, the recol-

lection of which lives always in my mind and will never leave me. There was the sense of being hunted, which made me wake up in the dead of night, and clutch at Olive's wrist and cry aloud for help; there was the silent deserted forest; the cottages where the poor creatures lived whose husbands were with the rebel armies, and whose children ran about as wild and as untaught as their mothers. There was the midday camp for dinner, and sometimes the night camp, when in the warm summer nights it was no great harm to sleep in the open. There were the bad corduroy roads, over which our hickory-built carriage, tough and yielding as steel, bumped and jumped us from the seat. There were the places where we had to get out and ford a stream; there were days when we could get no food, and days when we fared sumptuously. Our negro boy was always good-natured, laughing, happy, and careless; he had no fear or any anxiety. Our protector was always grim of aspect, yet kind of speech; rough in his manner, yet a very Don Quixote for chivalry towards women. To walk beside him was to feel that one had a protector indeed, as true and faithful as even my poor Jack would have been.

At last we came to the Alleghany Mountains. If I had not seen those hills, I should have thought the whole of America was one vast plain covered with pineforests; having seen them, when I think of places beautiful, my thoughts go back to the Alleghany Mountains.

Once on the other side we were soon in Tennessee.

To our great joy, the Federals held Nashville; and here, the very day we got there, we saw a great and splendid thing.

It was in the evening; a mighty crowd, almost entirely composed of negroes and coloured people, were gathered together in a square before a great building, which was, I suppose, the town-hall or government house. Presently there came forth to them a man of insignificant presence, like Paul, and, like him, the bearer of good tidings.

"In the name of this great Republic," he said in a solemn voice, "I proclaim you FREE."

Olive burst into crying and sobbing. It was the beginning of the end. Slavery was doomed.

The man was Andrew Johnson. Two years later, when the murder of Abraham

Lincoln put him in the president's place, and papers derided the self-made man, I thought of the great deed he had done in Tennessee, and how he had, on his own responsibility, given liberty to the thousands who, before his act, were like the cattle of the field, to be bought and sold.

We made no stay at Nashville, though there was nothing to fear, but took train, no longer in hiding or afraid, for the North; for we longed to be once more on British soil, out of the dreadful war, out of the never-ending controversy, out of the tears of women, out of the anxiety of men, out of the sights which showed us how terrible is war, and how strong of purpose were the men who would never lay down the sword till the cause was won.

When, at last, we crossed the bridge at Niagara, we had been six weeks upon our journey from the moment when we started from the flat and sandy shore to plunge into the depths of the Great Green Swamp.

Often, at night, I dream of that time. In my dream I am stumbling, tired, footsore, and hungry, over the sand among the piny woods, or across the yielding grass of the quicksands; beside me walks, patient, uncomplaining, always with a smile for me and a word of hope—always with the hopeless sadness for herself, poor Olive. It seems as if to the forest and the pines there shall never be any end. Or I am among the green slopes and wooded heights of the Alleghany Mountains. The air, here, is bright and clear; one feels stronger upon the hill-sides; we walk with elastic tread: with us is the tall, ungainly sailor, who hitches up one shoulder first, and then the other, who screws up his right eye tight, who chews tobacco as he goes; who talks with such a drawl; who inspires us with so much trust that I, for one, could laugh and sing. Or I am standing at the outer edge of that great throng of blacks, while the man of insignificant presence proclaims the freedom of the slaves, and Olive's tears are a hymn of thanks and praise.

CHAPTER THE LAST. THE WHIRLPOOL OF NIAGARA.

AT last we were on British soil. Truly there had been no danger to us since Andrew Johnson's proclamation at Nashville; but, as I have said, the country was wild with war excitement, and one longed

to be away from the dreadful anxieties depicted on every face.

The train landed us at last on the American side of the Falls; we crossed over and found on the English side a small hotel, where we thought of resting for a few days before we began to consider our plans. Olive, especially, wanted rest; she was pale and anxious; she had lost hope; she felt, she said, the approach of some fresh calamity; she knew that her husband, wherever he was, would bring her new sorrow and himself new disgrace. That dreadful punishment in which the dead were tied to the living was hers; for she was joined with a man dead to all goodness.

Here our protector left us, with thanks which were heartfelt, if any ever were. He had saved us from a most dreadful danger; he had literally torn us from the hands of our enemies; he had carried us across a rough and dangerous country, a country in which he who helped a runaway would have had a short shrift and a long rope; he had brought us to a place of safety. In addition, rude and rough sailor as he was, he had never intruded himself upon us, maintained the most perfect respect towards us; had paid all our expenses for us; and now, with a courtesy and consideration beyond all praise, he advanced us a sum of money to provide for our passage to England.

I have repaid that money long ago; but the faithful, loyal service I can never repay. And though I know not where my protector may be, I pray for him daily.

He left us, then, to make his way to Liverpool first, and, if that failed, to Nassau, in order to find another berth in a blockade-runner, nothing daunted by the ill-success of the last. He attributed the disaster, indeed, just as poor old Stephen did, to the presence of women aboard the ship. Some sailors, except on passenger ships where their admission is necessary, believe in the superstition that my sex brings misfortune to a ship. He promised faithfully to keep out of Captain Ramsay's way, and so we parted, and I have never seen him since.

The place, on the English side, was full of Southern ladies; they did not come to gaze upon the Falls, but to watch and wait. Alas for them! Their words were full of boast and promise; but the colour was fading from their cheeks and the light from their eyes in the days when day after day passed and the armies of the South made

no headway. Their brothers were with those armies; their sisters were starving in the lonely homesteads; their slaves were scattered, their fields untilled; and they believed—oh! how those poor creatures believed!—in the justice of a cause most unjust, and prayed—as only believers and faithful women can pray—for the success of arms which should never have been taken up.

I had written every day since we left Nashville letters to my dear Jack, telling him what we were doing, and how we fared. These letters I sent to London, but he did not get them till long afterwards, for a very good reason, as you shall hear. For, when the Poet told him what had happened, with tears in his eyes, taking shame and blame to himself, who was not to blame at all, but rather the reverse, as having clearly discerned the character of the villain Ramsay from the beginning, Jack, with no more delay than was necessary to turn everything he possessed into money—it was not much, poor fellow!—took train for Liverpool. He would cross over to America and search the States through till he found me. With him came his friend, the Poet. They landed at New York; here they heard of the wreck and burning of the Maryland off Cape Fear, the news of which was received with great joy, because her captain's name was well known as that of a most successful runner, and this was a new and very fast steamer. They read in the papers, further, how two ladies had been taken prisoners, but set ashore, because it was no use carrying Southern women to a Northern gaol. Then Jack breathed with relief, for he knew who one of the ladies was, and he hoped that I was among people who would protect me from the man Ramsay. The Americans make short work of men who insult women. Presently they heard, having by this time discovered where to learn news from the South—and, indeed, partly from the newspapers, partly from private letters, and partly from the information of spies, nothing was done in North Carolina, Virginia, or any other of the Confederate States, that was not immediately known in New York—the horrible news that the villain Ramsay had taken advantage of the Southern prejudices in the matter of colour to get a Hue and Cry sent through the country after us. The man who told Jack this was one of the sailors of the Maryland, who knew, as all the crew knew, that Olive was the Captain's wife, and had

followed her husband on board as a stowaway. Horrible! his own wife, though he had tried to put her away on a lying pretext, the woman whom he had sworn to love and protect, he had declared to be a runaway slave. As for me— Jack ground his teeth, but he could find no words fitting for his wrath and indignation. There are acts whose guilt is greater than any tongue can express; such was this act of the man who had betrayed me to cross the ocean on his ship. But then, to their joy and comfort, they heard how we had escaped, and were reported to be coming along by slow stages, and the help of the Underground Railway. If all went well, we might be expected in New York or Philadelphia in a fortnight or three weeks at latest.

As you know, our route was changed, and we came on with the help of another protector.

When we did not appear, and they learned that we had been carried away after the danger at Fayetteville by a sailor, their anxiety was very great. It was impossible to guess with any certainty whither the man had carried us, or whether he would be loyal; or whether, after all, he was not (having been a sailor under Captain Ramsay) a mere creature and servant of his, anxious, perhaps, to show his zeal to his chief by bringing back the runaways for no reward at all. Granted that he would be true to us, whither in so troubled a time would he take us? Not through Virginia; perhaps South by way of South Carolina, and so to New Orleans, though that was a long and perilous journey; perhaps even through the worst and most dangerous part of the country, where we should be least expected to venture.

Then, because news of us, not being of public interest, came slowly, they went north to Toronto, on the chance of hearing more about us there from the people interested in runaways. But no one there had heard anything of our story. Then they went back to New York, and from there to Philadelphia, where they learned the latest news from Wilmington. The latest news was to the effect that Captain Ramsay was still at Wilmington waiting for his two "runaways," but they had not been heard of, and it was thought that they had succeeded in making their escape; anyway, the country was much too disturbed to allow of the old-fashioned hot chase. Captain Ramsay had learned the

part played by his bo's'n in our escape, and went about stating his intentions (which were closely copied from the old modes of torture) with regard to that knight-errant.

Then, because publicity would now be a great thing for us, Jack wrote an account of the story so far as he knew it—be sure he made the most of Ramsay's marriage, and his treatment of his wife, though he knew nothing of the Indiana divorce—and sent it to one of the New York papers, which immediately published it. All the other papers copied it with comments. This, then, was the kind of thing which was possible in the South! A man marries a runaway mulatto, brings her back to North Carolina, and advertises her as a fugitive slave, while he advertises for an English girl, whom he has kidnapped, on the same pretext. Did ever an indignant world hear the like? Was there ever an institution like that called by its supporters the Peculiar and the Domestic? When the story had gone the round of the Northern journals, some treating it as a hoax, it was actually copied by a Richmond paper, in order to show the kind of rubbish with which Yankee abolitionists entertained their readers. The facts were, of course, indignantly denied; not only were they denied, but people with common sense were asked if it were even possible that they could be true. A Southerner, they said, could never, to begin with, marry a mulatto runaway; if he did, it was incredible that he should bring her back to her master—the lowest of humanity would revolt at such a wickedness; and then we were asked to believe that a man, whose name was mentioned, and who was at the very time among his friends at Wilmington, had still further kidnapped an English girl, and was trying to get her back when she had escaped, under the pretence that she, too, was a slave. Why, the story was monstrous!

Everybody at Wilmington knew the truth, because you cannot silence men's mouths, and the crew talked; yet so vigorously did Captain Ramsay adhere to his own statement, and so calmly resolute were his announced intentions of letting daylight into any who ventured to make assertions to the contrary, that public opinion only showed itself in a general desire to avoid his presence. This method, adopted at first by the more peaceful of the citizens, was gradually followed by the very rowdiest among the sailors and wild

creatures who haunted the Wilmington saloons. If the Captain showed at a bar there would be silence; presently the visitors at that bar dropped away one after the other, having immediate and important business elsewhere. This was galling to Captain Ramsay; he could not shoot a whole townful of men for the crime of having business elsewhere when he entered a saloon; and as nobody offered him any pretext, there was no shooting to be done. Presently, as Jack heard, there were murmurs abroad, the citizens met and talked things over, the Hue and Cry was torn down from the walls, and the name of Lynch was freely mentioned. At this juncture, Captain Ramsay disappeared.

"I know that he will run the inland blockade," said Olive, talking over things at Niagara. "He will cross the lines and make for New York. Then he will come North. I shall wait for him here."

"Will you forgive him?" I asked.

"Forgive? Oh! my dear, it is not a question of forgiveness. What have I not forgiven? What have I not endured? I must be with him to save him from worse things if I may. And—What is it, child?"

For below us, walking in the road, on the shady side, were no other than Jack and the Poet, and I was running and crying to fly into the arms of my lover. How he greeted me—with what words of affection and rejoicing—I cannot set down. When he let me go for a moment, I shook hands with the Poet, who hung his head guiltily.

"It was all my fault, Miss Avis," he said; "I ought to have followed you day and night. I knew he was a man-eater. I saw that from the very beginning."

"He would come with me, Avis," said Jack. "He has never left me day or night. See what it is to have a faithful Poet!"

He spoke in his old light, airy way, but his voice shook, and the tears stood in his eyes as he held my hands in his.

"You have suffered much, Avis. My poor girl: I would I could have suffered for you."

"I think you have suffered for me too, Jack."

And then I told him of Olive, who had left us together, and of what she had done, and of Liberty Wicks the quartermaster. Nothing would do now for Jack but

we must be married at once, to prevent any further chance, he said, of the man Ramsay, or Angel, or whatever he called himself, running away with me. Why, indeed, he said, should we wait? Such protection and guardianship as had been grudgingly afforded me by Stephen Cobbedick was now withdrawn, because the old man was killed (so far as we then knew). I had no friends to consult, and we loved each other. That consideration, indeed, was all that we wanted. Could I refuse my boy what he so ardently desired—the right to call me his own? We went, therefore, two days afterwards to the little Episcopal Chapel of Cliftonville, where we were married, the Poet giving me away. He gave me also, I remember, the most beautiful bracelet to be got at Niagara—it had been the property of a poor Southern lady, who sold it to pay her hotel bill—and a collection of feather fans bought at the little shops beside the Falls. And when we came to England, he gave me his book of poetry, which I shall always read with pleasure, though I prefer Tennyson and Longfellow, out of gratitude to my Jack's best friend.

One morning, a week after our marriage, Olive came and told me, with tears, how she had just heard from some quarter whence she got secret information, that a warrant had been issued against Valentine Angel, alias Jefferson Ramsay, alias a great many other names, including his first, Peregrine Pickle, for piracy on the high seas. It was one of those great and gallant deeds remembered and lauded by Stephen Cobbedick, committed some years before. They had other charges against him, but this would be taken first. The little matter of kidnapping a whole crew of free blacks at Boston, and selling them at New Orleans, would also be brought up again. Meantime, there was reason to believe that he was making for British territory; that he would cross the frontier at Niagara; and, unless he were captured before, would be taken on the bridge.

Olive spent that day on the other side, watching and waiting, if haply she might give her husband warning.

The next day and the next she sat or walked. All night, too, she had no sleep; she never left her watch; he might come at any moment.

On the fourth day he came.

He was in some kind of disguise, but she knew him. It was already growing dark ; he walked in the shadows of the great square hotels, away from the lights in the shop windows. She touched his arm. He turned, and recognised her with an oath.

"Do not cross the bridge to-night," she said. "They are on the watch for you everywhere ; lie in hiding ; you will be arrested."

He pushed her roughly from him with another oath, walked quickly to the toll-gate, paid his toll, and hurried over the bridge. What sign had been sent across I do not know, nor how they knew their man ; but as he neared the English side, three men stepped from the gate-house.

They were armed to the teeth with rifles and pistols, for they were going to catch a wild beast.

"Stand," cried one ; "we arrest you, Angel, alias Ramsay, for piracy on the high seas."

He looked back ; armed men were at the other end of the bridge. He drew his revolver, fired twice and missed, and, with a bound, leaped to the railings of the bridge, and dived headlong into the river, a hundred and fifty feet below.

Here the stream is narrow, and the deep water, between perpendicular rocks, rushes black, vehement, terrible even on the sunniest days, as if anxious to get away from the horror of the awful leap it has taken over the Fall behind. He would be a good swimmer who would keep his head above the water in such a stream ; he would be a strong swimmer who could think of holding his own, even with the current, in such a rush and roar of headlong waves until he could come to a place where the cliffs sink down and a landing-place might be found. Ramsay disappeared in the stream. A moment afterwards his head appeared upon the surface ; he had not, then, been killed by the leap ; he was alive, and he was swimming. Crack ! crack ! Three rifles were fired. His head disappeared again, and was no more seen. Olive's husband had met his fate.

Three miles or so below the Falls there is a place which visitors are always taken to see. The force of the water has hollowed out a round basin in the rocks, and a bank has been formed at the bottom of earth and crumbled rock, where grow the wild vine, the maple, and the hemlock of the

Canadian woods, with a thousand flowers, bushes, and climbing things which make this place a dream of loveliness. You may clamber round this bank, among this growth, and watch at your feet the great round whirlpool which the river forms. The season changes ; men come and go ; but the boiling, roaring water never ceases to rush round and round as if mad to devour something, and for ever in a fierce insatiable hunger and rage. Strange things sometimes come down from the Falls and are carried round upon its surface until, by some accident, they drift out of the whirling circle, and are either carried away down stream or thrown up on this bank ; no stranger or more awful thing ever came into this whirlpool, and was carried round and round, than that which was seen the day after Captain Ramsay's desperate leap. It was the body of a man. The waters hurried him ceaselessly round the sweeping circle ; in his hand he held a revolver ; hand and pistol were above the water, the rest of the body, black in the gloomy pool, only visible when the current bore it near the bank. And by the water's edge sat a woman with pale face and sunken eyes and clasped hands. She was waiting for the river to give up its dead.

For three days that awful hand, its fingers closed upon the pistol, was hurried round ; in the night of the third day the body of Captain Ramsay floated ashore, and was laid by the river itself, as if moved to pity at so much patience and so much grief, at the very feet of his widow.

They buried him in the churchyard at Cliftonville. At his head Olive placed a marble cross, with his initials and the date of his death, and beneath she wrote the words, "Thy mercy, Jesu!"

When all was over we took her away.

She came with us as far as Quebec, where we were to embark for England. Here she parted from us.

"My life," she said, "has gone from me ; there is but one thing left to do—to pray for a dead man ; there is only one Church which permits me so to pray ; I shall enter a convent, and pray for him night and day."

She kissed and wept over me ; she prayed for my happiness ; she thanked God that she had been of service to me ; and then the doors of the convent closed upon her, and Olive became, too, as one dead.

[December 1, 1880.]

I am glad to be able to add that Stephen was not killed; they carried him aboard the cruiser, where, for a spell, he had a pretty bad time; then he pulled round and presently found himself in a New York gaol, where he lay cooling his heels and reflecting for a good space, because, as I have said, they were hard on pilots. In the fulness of time, however, he returned to Boscastle, where, his rents having been collected for him in his absence, he settled down again to the comfortable old life.

He accounted for his departure by swearing that the notorious pirate, Captain Ramsay, had kidnapped him together with his niece; that in the rescue of that dear girl, at the end of their run—he could not avoid narrating the brilliant way in which he almost navigated the ship right into Wilmington on the darkest night ever known—he had received wounds innumerable, which he did not regret. Sometimes his friends would pull him up to ask how, seeing he had no brothers or sisters, the young lady could be called his niece. Then he reverted to the story of the raft, into which my husband and I never enquired further. The locality and the minor details always varied according to the geographical fancy of the moment; but he adhered to the leading situations of the story.

"I picked her up, gentlemen, lyin' with a hundred and fifty-three poor fellows—sailors—all starved to death, upon a raft. She was wropped in four bandanners. It was in latitude twenty-two and a half, where it's pretty hot, off the coast of Chili. Wherefore I took her aboard, fed her myself night and mornin' with a spoon and a bottle, and giv' her, for her benefit, the name of Cobbledick. Also, to make her feel properly proud of her family, I said her mother was a Knobling. This made her grow up haughty. I sought for her, gentlemen; I thought for her; I fought for her. I crossed the sea with her. I rescued her from the pirate, and I chucked him over the bridge into Niagara Rapids. Yet she remembered, in the long run, that she was but a Common Pick-me-up, after all, and married, in spite of her family connections, a journeyman painter who hadn't the money to pay his Marriage Settlements."

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